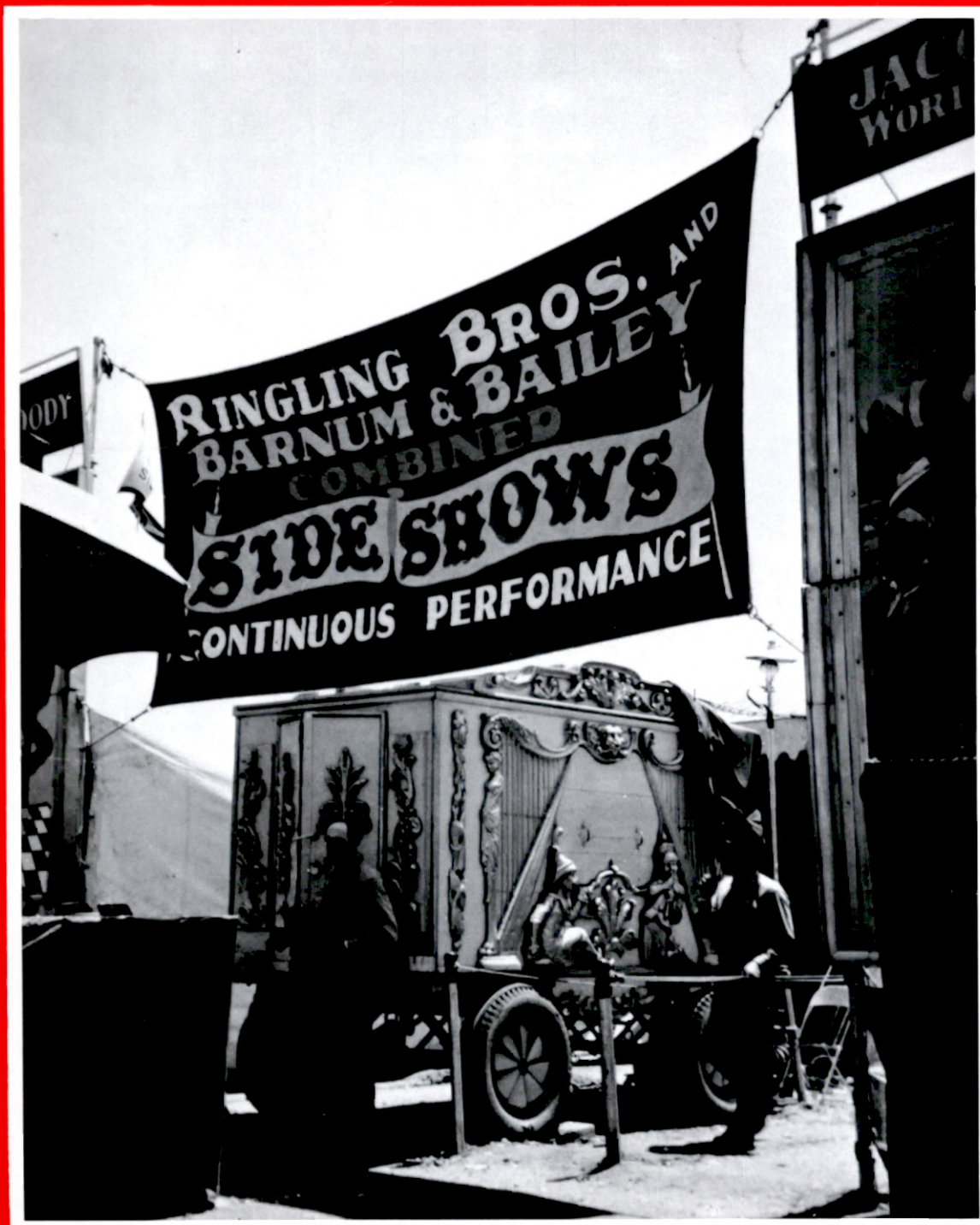


Bandwagon

THE JOURNAL OF
THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JULY-AUGUST 1994



BANDWAGON

The Journal of the Circus Historical Society

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THIS MONTH'S COVER

This month's cover shows the Harp and Jesters air calliope at the entrance of the Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey Circus side show.

The John Van Matre photo was taken on May 27, 1950 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Pfening Archives.

1994 CHS CONVENTION

Sarasota, Florida CHS members are excited about hosting the 1994 convention in their city, December 7-10.

The convention will feature a circus, tours and historical programs. It will be an unusual opportunity to meet past and present circus personalities.

The convention hotel will be the Holiday Inn Airport-Marina, located conveniently just north of the Sarasota airport, between Sarasota and Bradenton on North Tamiami Trail. Room rates will be \$49 for standard view and \$59 for bayview rooms, with suites available. A block of rooms has been set aside for the CHS. Reservations can be made by calling 813-355-2781 and asking for Julia, front desk manager. Advise her you are making a CHS convention reservation. The hotel offers complimentary van service to and from the Sarasota airport.

Make plans now to be a part of this meeting in Sunny Sarasota in December.

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CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY FINANCIAL STATEMENT May 1, 1993 to April 30, 1994

Cash beginning 5-1-93	19,966.02
Income	41,383.70
Expenses	<u>39,429.41</u>
Cash 5-1-94	21,920.31

INCOME

Dues	26,652.00
Subscriptions	2,932.00
Back Issue Sales	794.41
Bandwagon Advertising	3,966.00
1993 Convention and Auction	5,865.00
Bank Interest	<u>1,174.29</u>
Total	41,383.70

EXPENSES

Bandwagon Printing	29,953.71
Bandwagon Postage	3,035.00
Bandwagon Mailing Prep	1,583.05
Refunds	19.00
Secretary-Treasurer Expense	610.00
1993 Convention Expenses	3,568.13
Dues Notice Printing	562.74
Bank Charges, Foreign Exchange	<u>97.78</u>
Total	<u>39,429.41</u>
NET GAIN ON YEAR	1,954.29

Submitted by Dale C. Haynes, Secretary-Treasurer



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On July 16, 1956 John Ringling North announced in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: "The era of the tented city is, in my opinion, a thing of the past."

He added, "An all new presentation of the circus will open next April 3 in Madison Square Garden in New York. The remainder of the 1957 season will be played in air conditioned arenas all over the United States."

Thus ended the long history of the Greatest Show on Earth under canvas, done in by union problems and bad management.

The big show started a downhill slide following the St. Paul, Minnesota massacre in 1955 when Frank McClosky and his legion of bosses were run off the show.

Although the 1956 Madison Square Garden stand had produced a strong gross, problems started as soon as the show went under canvas.

One of the most serious blowdowns in its history occurred in Geneva, New York on July 1 when the big top was lost. For a few days Ringling "blue skyed it" until the 1955 big top arrived from Sarasota. It was the beginning of the end. In Meadville, Pennsylvania on July 11 the seat wagons were left on the train for unknown reasons and the performance was given seatless.

Aware of serious problems, North joined the show in Canton, Ohio on July 14. He was shocked at the condition of the equipment. A number of the seat wagons were in ragged shape. The show was in the red to the tune of \$1,650,000.

The circus limped into the Steel City on the 16th following a series of late arrivals including one the previous day at Alliance, Ohio where the single performance began at 7:30 p.m. Slowdown instructions from the Teamster's union had brought the show a new title, the latest show on earth. Late arrivals and late performances had become the norm. North was appalled at what he found and late on the night of July 15 he scribbled out the announcement of the closing, giving it to Rudy Bundy to read to employees at 11:00 a.m. the next day. North remained closeted in his private car, not going near the Pittsburgh show grounds.

I witnessed the final show

RINGLING-BARNUM ON TRUCKS Season of 1957 By Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

in Pittsburgh that night and heard the band play *Auld Lang Syne*. Watching the show tear down for the last time was one of the saddest moments of my life.

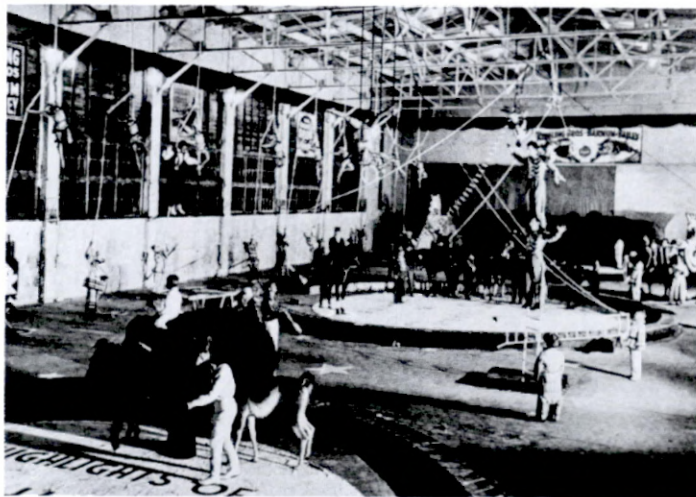
After a pokey tear down and train loading the aggregation made a depressing three day journey back to Sarasota. Those who wished were allowed to ride the train back home; others left on their own. North remained in seclusion during the run, not allowing anyone in his car.

The show trains were met by a loyal group of Sarasota residents. Merle Evans, who had previously left the show, had a make-shift band on hand. It was a sad day for everyone.

North had given no thought to the problems of his employees. After they arrived in Sarasota the out of work circus people found they were not eligible for unemployment compensation.

The show was unloaded in winter quarters with the still-full wagons scattered about the property. The quarters was

Rehearsing the 1957 show in the former train barn in winter quarters. Howard Tibbals collection.



opened to the public which gathered some money. In October Cleveland Indians owner Bill Veeck offered to buy it all for a quarter of a million dollars. His offer was not accepted.

The October 13, 1956 *Billboard* reported: "The wondrous activities of Art Concello are being observed throughout circusdom. As the season for building, buying and planning nears, his name kicks up in connection with nearly every possibility."

"It starts with Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. Rumors there go in every direction and Concello is in all of them. He has been linked with rumored moves by John Ring-

ling North, with the confirmed action by the minority stockholders, and with independent possibilities.

"Concello's influence ranges beyond the Ringling show, however. Five persons associated in the ownership of the Clyde Beatty Circus equipment are or have been close business associates of Concello. There is general speculation in circus business that he figures somewhat in the Beatty operation."

North knew shortly after bringing the show back from Pittsburgh that he needed his former cohort and problem solver, Arthur M. Concello, to keep the circus going. The two began discussions a month or so later.

Knowing fully well he was in the driver's seat, Concello had to be wooed by North. He held out for the title of executive director, a seat on the board of directors and ten percent of the company stock. With his back against the wall North agreed to all conditions and in essence handed the show over to his friend Artie. From that point on, it was Concello Bros. Circus all the way.

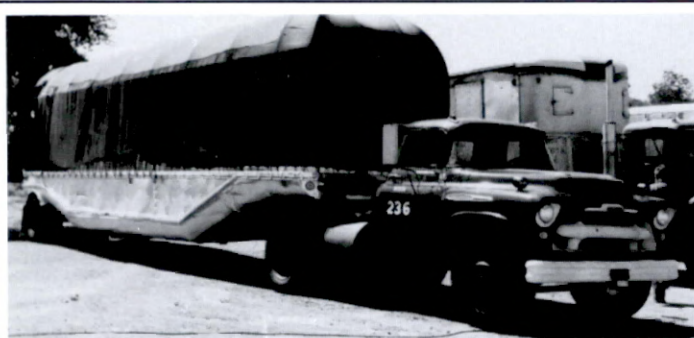
The October 27 *Billboard* reported: "Concello returns to Ringling helm, tells of indoor plan."

"John Ringling North is sticking to his idea of making Ringling-Barnum an indoor show and he has delegated Arthur M. Concello to build it."

"The new Ringling-Barnum," Concello said "will play buildings. It will move on about fifteen balloon-top Pennsylvania Railroad baggage cars plus an equal number of system-owned sleepers," he said.

"The show's own train of more than 80 special cars will not be used."

"After opening in April at Madison Square Garden and playing Boston Gardens, the show's me-



Semi-trailer No. 236 carried spec floats. The former auto transport trailer had a green canvas top. Semi No. 232 was identical and also carried spec floats. Both trailers were pulled by new Chevrolet tractors. Pfening Archives.

nagerie will be returned to the Sarasota quarters.

"The show itself will move on to arenas or ball parks in Washington, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Raleigh, Charlotte and Montgomery. This will add up to a ten week season, which he said is booked. The show will then close in June.

"After laying off during the hot summer weeks, Ringling-Barnum will operate again in mid September for the second phase of the season will end about December 15. The 1957 edition of the show will be resumed after the holidays and operate from mid-January, 1958, to mid-March. At that time it will close down again to prepare for opening a new edition at New York in April 1958.

"Concello said he and North had been discussing the proposal for about ten weeks. He said that North had 'turned the show over to me and I will do the best I can with it.'

"The returned executive, who has been away from the show since 1953, said that Harold Genders will be his assistant and that Leon Pickett, R-B contracting agent, would contract the buildings. No other individuals were named, and Concello said that many details of staff and operation remain to be worked out.

"In addition, Concello said he was going to carry out the ideas advanced earlier for making the quarters in Sarasota a tourist attraction

"The indoor circus, meanwhile, will carry about 22 elephants and 60 to 70 horses. Except for the menagerie at New York and Boston, no other animals will be carried, he said.

"Intentions are for the performance to be little changed from town to town as is possible in view of the difference in layout of individual buildings. Concello said that he had booked the first set of buildings for the initial ten weeks and that about 25 buildings per season would be played.

"The show equipment, including spec floats, props, and other paraphernalia, will be constructed to specific measurements so they will fit in the baggage cars which the show will use for its moves.

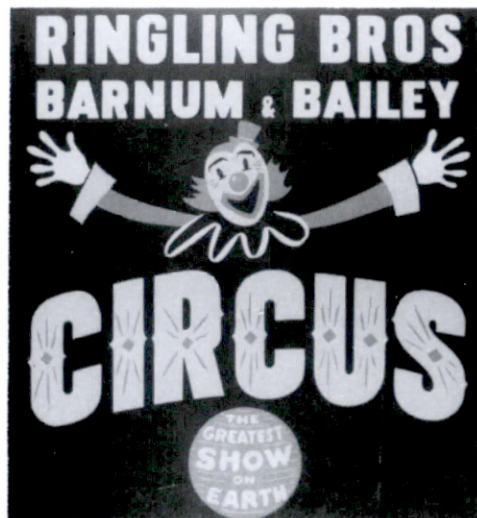
"This change in method of moving is one of the most notable features of the show's current plans. It means that the show would move in passenger service rather than freight. The number of cars still would require special moves, and these would be similar to those by ice shows, symphony groups and some legit companies.

"Concello said it has not yet been determined whether the show would sell its wagons, railroad cars and other equipment now in Sarasota. He said the show's animals would be retained and that its opaki would be moved to the proposed zoo at quarters.

"From another source it was understood that no stock in the Ringling corporation has changed hands. Other sources also indicated that North was planning to spend much of the time in Europe while Concello operates the new style Ringling-Barnum.

"At quarters, Concello's arrival brought a flurry of activity. Wagons and trucks which had been parked helter-skelter after the show's arrival in July were being relocated and there were other signs that

Window card designed for the 1957 season. Circus World Museum collection.



Mack No. 235 and tiger cage semi-trailer No. 135. The semi was built by Eddie Belletti and was one of five with the show's title. Pfening Archives.

the show, which had been virtually without direction since its closing, was coming to life again."

The big show was venturing into a totally new area of show business. Far from having a defined plan for the new way of doing business the show floundered in the early stages of booking.

No decisions had been made regarding the use of sponsors or independent promoters. Many avenues were being considered. Early contacts were made in different directions.

Harry S. Dube, an unlikely candidate, was placed in charge of the routing and booking of venues.

Dube, publisher of the circus program, booked most of the buildings in 1957. Harry Lashinsky, a friend of Rudy Bundy's, also entered the Ringling picture. The Charleston, West Virginia promoter had presented various attractions in buildings around the country. Lashinsky's roll may have been one of consulting with Dube as he did not promote any stands.

Originally the show planned to play a solid route in two stages, but found that available locations would not allow as many playing days as thought in a logical route.

Concello also played a part in contracting buildings for the 1957 tour. The November 17 *Billboard* reported that he and Pat Valdo had arrived in Houston, Texas to talk with Shrine officials about that organization sponsoring a Ringling appearance there. The article said the pitch for Houston may have indicated a switch in Ringling's new approach. In most other spots where the show had contracts local auspices was not used.

Meanwhile the 49ers, the descendants of Charles and Alf. T. Ringling who owned 49% of the stock, were coming to life. The December 8, 1956 *Billboard* reported that they had called a special board meeting to question North about the closing and future plans for the show.



The December 15 *Billboard* said that the former car barn and paint shop building at the Sarasota quarters had been converted into a circus arena for use in framing and rehearsing the show's indoor unit. It was 80 by 200 feet, the same measurements the show required for indoor presentations. Part of the sides of the building were knocked out so the seat wagons could be placed there. The building was fitted with aerial rigging, the ceiling was painted, and old rails were torn out of the floor. New spec floats were being built at Eddie Billetti's Circus Hardware and Supply Company. Costumes, horse blankets, elephant blankets, trappings and building decorations were being made in the sail loft.

Harry Dube produced some early publicity for the show. The December 22 *Billboard* said he had appeared on Mike Wallace's New York television program, assuring listeners that there would be a 1957 tour. Dube had begun selling advertising in the 1957 program and needed to lay some ground work.

The same issue reported that final arrangements had been made for the Ringling show to play the Rhode Island Auditorium in Providence. The engagement was scheduled to begin on May 20, the day after the show was to close in Boston.

Truck No. 229, a 1956 GMC, carried footlights. It was the laundry truck in 1956. Pfening Archives.

New Chevrolet tractor No. 230 and semi-trailer No. 130 carried wardrobe. Truck No. 231 and semi No. 131 were identical. Pfening Archives.

More details of the Ringling plans came in the January 16 *Billboard*. A fifteen week route was outlined by Concello. He revealed that some changes and additions had been made since November, saying that the show might make considerably fewer stands during the year than had been originally anticipated.

The opening was set for April 3 in Madison Square Garden, and that the first half of the season would end, probably on July 15, with an open air date in Philadelphia. Other ball park dates were scheduled for the final three weeks of the summer route.

Three hundred performers were to be supplemented by not more than one hundred workmen. Concello said it cost as much as \$175,000 a week to run the show in 1956 and that the planned operation might chop that amount to \$60,000.

Harold Genders was named manager. Eddie Belletti would return to the road as superintendent. Lloyd Morgan was to handle transportation and Bill Reynolds would handle the show's relationship with railroads and buildings. Doug Morris and Whitey Versteeg would handle the lights. Pat Valdo, assisted by Bob Dover, was in charge of the personnel.

Richard and Edith Barstow were again the choreographers. Miles White and Max

Weldy were to design the costumes. Clown Otto Griebing had been signed. Paul Jung and Paul Wenzel would produce the clown numbers.

The route announced in January included New York, Boston, Providence, Rochester, Hershey, Norfolk, Raleigh, Charlotte, Winston-Salem, Baltimore, Washington and Philadelphia. The last three cities were booked for ball parks or outdoor stadiums. The show was looking for major fair dates later in the season. The Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto was close to being signed for an August date.

The ball park and fair dates required outdoor rigging. For the fair dates the plan was to set up three rings on the grandstand track, backed up with poles for webbing. A long cycloramic backdrop was to be spread across the rear from end to end. One tent was to be used behind the backdrop for wardrobe and props.

Without the standard circus sleepers the employees had to hotel it, or use their own house trailers. With no cookhouse they were on their own for eating, although a small amount was to be added to salaries for eating expense.

By January details of the rolling equipment were announced. The equipment and animals were to be hauled in show trucks on regular flatbed and baggage railroad cars. The personnel were to travel by train using tickets provided by the show. As the route began to firm up changes were made in the framing and transportation of the show.

The early plans suggested that the show would be similar to a touring production like an ice show. One advance man was to be used and perhaps a general public relations man. The arenas were to contract billboard space and handle promotion.

Concello went to work doing what he knew best, framing the show on a mini-

The unnumbered shop and welding truck was a 1955 Chevrolet. It was used in 1956 to carry the advance baby elephant. Pfening Archives.



num number of trucks. He also designed new indoor and outdoor aerial rigging.

In February program publisher Harry S. Dube was named national routing director. He was authorized to negotiate and sign agreements with arenas, associations and purchase circus advertising.

Meanwhile the Ringling cousins continued to be upset about the management of the show. In response John North made a written offer to pay \$1,750,000 for their 490 shares of Ringling-Barnum stock.

The February 9, 1957 *Billboard* stated that North had indicated earlier that he planned to make such an offer. The offer was made through Dan Gordon Judge, trustee of the estate of Mrs. Charles Ringling, who in turn called a meeting of the 49ers on January 26 in Sarasota. The 49ers could not agree on what to do and told Judge to go back to North and renegotiate.

On January 31, 1957 Hester Ringling Sanford petitioned the court and was granted a writ of mandamus calling upon the show to produce all books and records for examination by her accountants. North answered by making financial records available.

By early February the performance had been firmed up. The February 16 *Billboard* reported: "A press preview of the next Ringling-Barnum edition was staged at winter quarters on February 4. Acts which were wintering in Sarasota were gathered for picture taking at the former railroad car barn that had been converted into a practice arena. The name of the specs were announced as 'Coronation of Mother Goose,' 'Cherry Blossom Time' with a Japanese theme and featuring Gal-la Shawn on the high trapeze, 'Saratoga Racing Ball of 1913' with elephants, and a finale 'Carnival in Venezuela.' Paul Jung was announced as producing clown.

"Meanwhile, equipment was being altered for the new style show. Four former water trucks, a wrecker and a welding truck have been stripped for refitting as tractors to pull semi-trailers. Three of the canvas trucks probably will go on the road hauling equipment.

"The rhino and hippo cages have been repaired in the Belletti shops, and along with other menagerie cages are to be taken to New York. This move would require the use of show owned flats. After New York and Boston the menagerie would be returned to quarters."

The reference to the truck remodeling indicated that the original plan for moving everything on system rail cars had been changed. The new plan called for trucks to haul everything except the elephants, horses and rigging.

When the decision was made to go to trucks plans called for fifteen semi-

trailers. However as the actual loads were determined it was found that fewer trucks were needed. The show then began looking for semi-trailers.

On February 22 the show purchased four used 1949 furniture vans from the Fruehauf dealer in Jacksonville for \$1,750 each. It later bought two more drop frame 1956 semis at \$5,100 each. Two 1956 semi trailers (auto carriers) were bought from the Complete Auto Transport Company in Detroit. Other aluminum trailers were purchased from the Thompson Trailer Company in Pikesville, Maryland. Six 1957 Chevrolet tractors, costing \$3,500 each, and two 1952 used tractors at \$3,804 each came from Cox Chevrolet in Bradenton, Florida.

Six of the newer Mack trucks from the under canvas show were converted for over the road use. They were No. 233, 1952 LJ model; No. 234, 1951 LJ model; No. 235, 1953 LJ model; No. 238, 1950 LJ model; No. 239, 1947 model; and No. 254, long wheel base, former menagerie canvas. The short wheel base trucks were equipped with fifth wheels to pull semi-

This newspaper ad appeared in the *New York Times* on March 17, 1957. Pfening Archives.



Ringling Bros. BARNUM & BAILEY CIRCUS

OPENS

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Send self addressed stamped envelope with check or money order payable to Ringling Bros. Circus, Madison Sq. Garden. Add 25c for handling

trailers. No. 235, the former wrecker truck, pulled a semi-trailer loaded with small tiger cages. Original plans for the 1956 big top canvas Mack to be used were scraped.

Rehearsals continued in quarters. Belletti built new ring curbs and indoor and outdoor rigging that had been designed by Concello. A new tiger trailer was built and the semi trailers were modified to carry their respective loads. Versteeg prepared a new lighting system.

The indoor show was ready for the opening in Madison Square Garden on April 3. Work continued on the outdoor equipment during the New York and Boston stands.

Reframing the show was expensive. With no cash reserves, North had to be resourceful in providing the money to get the show on the road. A 90 day note for \$100,000 came from his Rockland Oil Company of Ardmore, Oklahoma, with North turning over some of his stock in the oil company as collateral. North also signed a personal note with the First National Bank of Dallas.

Late spring cash shortages were not new to the big show. There had often been talk of hauling a trunk full of bills to New York each spring. It had been rumored that the Garden had occasionally advanced freight charges to get the show train to New York.

The April 6 *Billboard* told of the move to New York: "Ringling-Barnum used 15 of its own cars and a single Pennsylvania Railroad baggage car as well as several show owned trucks to move from quarters to New York for its opening stand.

"Efforts to obtain a sponsor for a television preview of the circus were unsuccessful this season. The show itself was not eager to be televised.

"Leaving Sarasota, the show was on eight flats, two elephant cars, two horse cars and three sleepers.

"The show is using motor transport to an important degree for the first time. It has two 35 foot drop frame trailers for carrying wardrobe. These are nicely painted and lettered. In addition there are four more trailers painted aluminum and not lettered. Two auto transport trailers are being adapted for use in carrying the spec floats.

"The system baggage car was used to carry props and rigging. A framework built of aluminum tubing has been designed for use in hanging the show when it plays outdoor dates, but the regular indoor rigging is carried now and the new device will not be seen until the outdoor dates begin.

"A new lighting system, with boxes of spots and floods that can beamed at aerial or ground acts, is being built. New trunks for wardrobe and props were built.

"Four of the Mack trucks formally fitted with water tanks and used on the railroad show now have been equipped with fifth wheels for use with the semi-trailers. There are four new Chevrolet trucks, also for semi-trailer use. A big canvas truck from previous years is being used without alteration. An ex-wrecker, ex-welder and a straight bed truck also may be in the fleet.

"It was clear that the 15 car train which went to New York is not to make the proposed full season. It will go to Boston and then return to Sarasota. No menagerie will be carried at other stands. The show then will be largely motorized."

The train to New York included:

- Run Flat Car #110
 - No. 237 Mack truck, with van carrying indoor rigging.
 - No. B-4 Cat.
 - No. C-5 Case tractor.
 - No. 10 Menagerie equipment wagon.
- Flat Car #111
 - No. B-5 Cat.
 - No. C-6 Case tractor.
 - No. 92 Performing lions.
 - No. 83 Giraffe wagon.
- Flat Car #112
 - No. 85 Hippo den.
 - No. 81 Cage, five leopards.
 - No. 83 Cage, lions.
 - No. 79 Cage, three Nubian lions.
 - No. 76 Cage, tigers.
- Flat Car #113
 - No. 82 Rhino den.
 - No. 93 Performing tigers.
 - No. 94 Performing bears.
- Flat Car #114
 - No. 97 Gorilla cage.
 - No. 86 Giraffe wagon.
 - No. 73 Cage, jaguar, puma, leopard.
 - No. 72 Cage, tapir.
- Flat Car #115
 - Float, Alice in Wonderland spec float.

Mack No. 254, loaded with rubber mats, on the train to New York. Bob MacDougall collection.



- Float, Trojan Horse spec float.
- Float, Queen of Hearts spec float.
- Flat Car #116
 - No. 254 Mack truck with rubber mats.
- Float, Pinocchio spec float.
- Float, Hansel & Gretel spec float.
- Flat Car #117
 - Float, Cinderella.
 - Float, Old Woman in Shoe
 - Float, Mother Goose.
- Horse Car #101
- Horse Car #102
- Elephant Car #225
- Elephant Car #226
- Sleeper #373 Louisville
- Sleeper #374 Birmingham
- Sleeper #375 Washington
- One system owned baggage car carrying props and rigging.
- In addition the motorized equipment going to New York included:
 - Two Mack trucks with 35 foot drop frame semi-trailers carrying wardrobe.
 - Four Chevrolet trucks with semi-trailers carrying rigging and props.
- Tom Parkinson reviewed the 1957 edition in the April 6 *Billboard*: "A new Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus got under way Wednesday. Make no mistake; it's still the Greatest Show on Earth. For this 87th Barnum and 74th Ringling

The former under canvas gilly bus was used as an office in 1957. Gene Baxter photo from Bob MacDougall collection.

edition there has been plenty of major surgery and overhauling. More is in the works. The result is a new show that is all things to all people.

"Those who have bought the show for arena dates and fairs have signed for a first-rate circus, the biggest and best in the land as it stands here in New York.

"Those who are looking for a new organization and operation will find it here in Ringling's rebuilt apparatus, its different concept in programming of acts in keeping with indoor dates and fairs.

"Those expecting to see the new Ringling as routine, among the established indoor circuses, will spot acts and methods from the others.

"But those who are expecting to see Ringling produce something more than customary in the established indoor shows, will see their answer in the Ringling-sized specs and production numbers.

"And those who are seeking the old familiar Ringling-Barnum show can find solace with the fact that much in the way of method and personnel has been carried over to the new show. There are acts and staffers to identify this one with all the Ringling-Barnum that has gone before.

"The only thing is, it isn't going to play under canvas this year. Last week there was optimism about the new layout in enough quantity to indicate chances of a tented show in 1958 are slimmer than they have been. The New York and Boston stands, of course, always have been indoors. The rest of them this year will be indoors or in front of open-air grandstands. When those road stands start, there will be changes in the performance, and how the show will draw indoors elsewhere remains to be seen.

"The first performance of the year began with an overture by Izzy Cervone's band. It has no violins this year, but still is not a circus band, and the overture is like





The Justino Loyal riding act in Columbus, Ohio. Fred Pfening photo.

that of a stage show. Harold Ronk is announcer and vocalist, but his announcing duties were taken over for the most part by visiting celebrity Dan Dailey at this showing. Robert Dover is equestrian director, Pat Valdo is general director. It is produced by John Ringling North, staged by the Barstows, designed by Miles White, directed in the air by Margaret Smith.

"The first display has the Trevor Bale tiger act at one side and Albert Rix bear act at the other. In the center is Hugo Schmitt's zebra-llama-elephant combination. Schmitt's novelty is going to be good, but it was still a little spotty opening night.

"Bale's tiger act is a big, spectacular number and will be the principal opener on the road. The bear act will return to quarters from here.

"Clown bust-out brings about a dozen clowns to the track. Lou Jacobs and Felix Adler are among the standouts in the array.

"Dipsy Doodle Divers is the third display. Where the show formally had three flying return riggings placed parallel, one over each ring, it now has three riggings end to end. The center one is for the divers. Members of the flying return acts step in turn from little canvas houses at either end of the rigging. They dive into a net at the end of the flying act.

"Aerialists have the arena for the fourth display. Over ring 2 Antoinette Bisbini has a single trapeze routine that climaxes with a neck swivel. Over state 1 the Rixos (Nocks) have an aerial tetterboard ladder. Above stage 2 Miss Elizabeth (Nock) works a single trapeze with an added gimmick in the form of a giant hoop. At ring 3 are the Ninon Sisters (Hanel) with a double trapeze, iron-jaw and double suspension turn. The Rixos stay on with a special announcement for Dorothy Nock's headstand while Karl Nock counterbalances the ladder; this needs tightening up time-wise. Miss Elizabeth stays for a break-away dive that brings gasps.

"The elephant display now is a three-

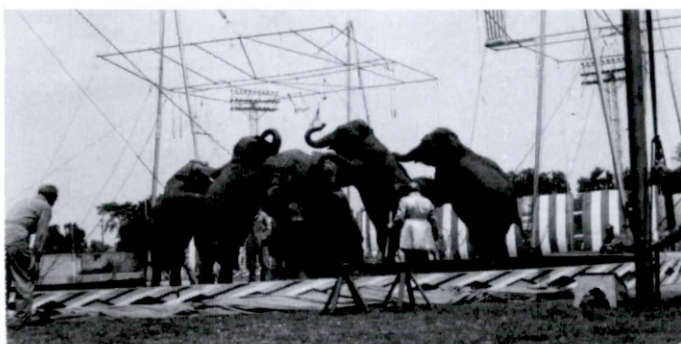
herd performance using 16 bulls, and it replaces the elephant-spec combinations of recent Ringling format. In rings 1 and 3 Benny White and Edward Healy are the herd-workers, with five bulls each. These routines are not as fast as they should be.

"In the center ring Hugo Schmitt, elephant superintendent, is in charge of six small elephants that are working in good shape and show promise of greater things. Generally unnoticed by the audience and unannounced is the presence in this act of a young African male elephant, rare among U. S. elephant acts. Presumably, this point will get more notice when Schmitt feels it is ready. The elephants get no help from the band, Music is slow and dirge-like and tends to make the act semi-slow rather than big and majestic.

"With display 7 it is apparent that this is a North-Ringling show. Here is a girl production in the regular grand manner. 'Cherry Blossom Time' is a web number with Japanese theme and elaborate introduction. Thirty-two girls enter the track and dance to John Ringling North's compositions. Other choruses go to the stages to dance and to form tableaux. The 32 then go into the web routine. Over the center ring is Galla Shawn, recovered from a recent fall, trim in a trapeze head-balancing routine. This is a big air-filling display of Ringling proportions. Wardrobe is nice.

"Singular attention then focuses on Galla Shawn for her one-foot stand on a swinging trapeze, head-balancing on the swinging trap and a finale in which she does the headstand on a spiraling trapeze.

"Clowns walk around again. Then comes a big five act display of wire walking. In the center is Tonito, who performs bounding wire routines at this point. The Dam Brothers start with two-highs and a foot-to-head stand on a unicycle, then move to low wire for a cross-over via unicycle while doing a head-to-head stand. The Nock Trio



Hugo Schmitt and the center ring elephants in Columbus, Ohio. Fred Pfening photo.

performs on a wire and adds unicycle wiring before bowing out early. Lola Dobrich is at one end with her highly styled wire ballet work. At the other end is Lolita Perez's wire turn with cycling and a hoop swinging business. This is a heavily populated display mindful of Ringling shows 20 years ago.

"Ninth display is bareback riding. The central location goes to the Justino Loyal troupe. The eight people and five horses open with a giant pyramid, the switch to their principal riding, somersaulting, ribbon jumping and Justino's comedy leaps and falls. In this case they skipped anything more spectacular than unannounced single somersaults on a single horse.

"Other riders have divided into the Parent-Bostocks and the Kristensens. The Parent-Bostocks open with a two-horse carrying turn, then develop lady principal, jockey and hoop-jumping phases. The Kristensens display speed and better style with similar carrying, hoop and

"Back on Ringling with his head-jumping act of long ago is Kaichiro Nam-jockey riding. Again, the music seems off for a riding act.

The Cinderella spec float with Felix Adler on board. Pfening Archives.





Pinocchio spec float, cut down version with small rubber tires. Pfening Archives.

ba. He enters simply, then flips to a headstand and from that positions neatly jumps on his head to each step in a stairs prop.

"Clown productions, like the girl productions, serve to tie this Ringling offering to earlier ones. Display 11 does that with Paul Jung's Misfit Army.

"The next display is another that fills three rings and two stages with acrobatics. Valitha and Aldino are in the center performing blindfolded jumps into giant barrels and then a string of broad jumps over chairs three times around the ring. The cycling Goetches (4) are on one stage with their two and three high cycling that's good.

"New is the cycle act by Trevor Bale and three girls. He uses a high unicycle, tiny bike and a bedstead cycle for good comedy. The Hanel comedy bar and casting act got started late opening but the four people click with their feats and particularly with the comedy of a dwarf. Completing the display are the Ivanovs, good looking comedy bar act that is well-paced, well-styled and well routined.

The former menagerie canvas truck, carrying rubber mats, in Boston in 1957. Bob MacDougall collection.



New lighting system within the ring curbs is used for this display, which is the best big number to this point.

"Lou Jacob's comedy midget car is back, establishing another familiar landmark and bringing more laughs, though not as heavy a brand as ten years ago.

"Bob Top and Lauren are in keeping with the show's plan to play fairs. Their act utilizes a small plat-

form high in the air for otherwise routine roller skating.

"Mother Goose Coronation Parade' is a walk-around spec that serves to theme the whole show this year. It utilizes a set of big jeep and wagon floats, some novelties such as a four-mule hitch on a little cart and a pony pulling a two-wheeled pumpkin. Floats are adequate, and while some will note they and the entire spec are not so elaborate and heavy as in the past, it also must be stressed that this is far more than that carried by anything else on the road and that no other indoor circus comes close.

"Main item in the spec is the float in the center ring. It unfolds, blossoms and expands to become a brilliant multi-colored castle. Combined with bright costumes of many people, the carts, floats, teams and several elephants, the display makes a great flash and is not unlike the type of production done on ice shows. An intermission follows and it will be standard on the road, too, something new to Ringling.

"The flying return launches the second part of the show. One act is the Flying Alexanders; the other is a newly formed group with Walter Long and Jeannie Sleeter as leapers. The latter act throws a single layout, single somersault, birds-nest, and a couple of other stunts. With Fay Alexander as the kingpin, the Alexanders open with a layout, then do a

birds nest, somersault and a twister to a stick, hocks-off and a two-and-a-half somersault for a good effect and strong reception. Clincher in the display is a passing leap by each act, Alexander adding a somersault to his pass.

"After a clown walk-around, the show displays four juggling turns at the

same time. These are the Bisbinis, with hoops, ladders and clubs for two-highs; the Marilex Duo, with plate-spinning; Lottie Brunn, with near-duplicate of her brother's fast and prop-laden act; and the Four Colleanos, going strong in the family tradition.

"Clowns are back with the Atom Smasher.

"Saratoga Racing Ball of 1913' is another full-scale Ringling display. It brings an array of carriages and teams, another demonstration that this is a bigger, heavier show than others. Second phase has the ballet in jockey wardrobe for a waltzing number. The Mroczkowskis and a single white horse waltz in the center ring; couples dance on each of the two stages. Then come the carriages and pretty passengers. Friedel Paster rides high school in one end ring and Marion Seifert rides high school in the other. Two more riders were listed in a version of the program but were not used opening night. A change in this number from last year is the use of far fewer horses and a still greater number of people.

"Schumann's Dogs and Hodgini's Dog and Pony follow. Sciplini's Chimps is one of the better new acts in this field and is getting much attention from Ringling staffers. The young chimps ride two on a bike, push a baby buggy, play leapfrog, perform on horizontal bars and play musical instruments.

"The perch display is another show of strength. In the center are the Platos in fast double trapeze manipulations. At each side is an outstanding high perch act, the Aguilar on one side and Del Morales on the other. At one end are the Three Canastrellis with unsupported ladders and then foot perch ladder work. At the other are the Kayarts (Arturos) with balancing atop a ladder.

"Clowns reappear for the firehouse gag.

"Again flying people in brilliant costuming fill the arena, this time for a big display by five tetherboard and acrobatic troupes. These are the Young brothers and sister in the center ring with their Oriental turn; Toyakers and Bokaras on stages with tetherboard flipping, and Fredi and son, tetherboard-trampoline, and Young China Troupe, Oriental act, in the side rings.

"The Alzanas again amaze the crowd with straight stepping and hints of missteps. Harold Alzana walks up the inclined wire to meet three girls with whom he performs on the high wire.

"The new Ringling finale is a departure. Ballet girls enter for dancing. Clowns and others join and handlers bring in two elephants. Into the rings and stages come dozens of performers. It is in the style of a dramatic show, musical or ice show; everyone comes out for a final bow. It il-

lustrates the new Ringling touch in that there are many people, as many as before, but generally fewer horses, elephants and other circus encumbrances.

"Running time is expected to be about 2 hours and 40 minutes."

The new style Ringling show was off and running. During the Garden stand, which ran until May 12, plans for the season again changed.

The April 20 *Billboard* reported that the season would run until March 1958. A late count had projected a route of arenas and fairs that if finalized would keep the show in action for nearly a full year. A high point on the possible route was a month's stand in Mexico City, a string of Texas dates, winter stops in Milwaukee, Minneapolis and Chicago, and then the opening of rehearsals for the 1958 season before the current show would call it quits in March 1958.

Performers contracts were to be of two types. One would be for seven weeks, for the New York and Boston stands, some acts with those contracts being dropped then. Others with those contracts might be kept on. Other pacts called for 10 weeks' work out of 14 weeks' time. The shorter term contracts had renewal clauses.

This was clear indication that the performance would be stronger in some cities than others. Two of the new acts, Kai-chi Namba and Scipilini's chimps, would make the full tour. The specs would continue to make a big flash at all stands.

Norfolk, Virginia had been contracted for a June 9-16 stand. The Norfolk deal was a direct sale at a flat fee, according to Dube, who was directing the routing of the show.

The first outdoor date was to be at Griffith Stadium in Washington D. C., July 10-14, followed by another outsider at Philadelphia from July 23-28. Agents were at work to fill in the following month. Stands in Ohio were possible after Philadelphia.

This was the first indication that the summer layoff had been cancelled. The August route took the show to Albany and Syracuse, New York, and Columbus and Youngstown, Ohio before going to Toronto, August 26-31.

The April 20 *Billboard* reported that business in New York was a little better than in 1956. In the same issue Tom Parkinson told how Ringling was fitting into its arena operation. Harry Dube was acting as agent but usually remained in New York. Dube said the arenas were expected to supply light men, ushers, ticket sellers and sixteen musicians to work with the two the show would carry. Ringling was to supply the services of two press agents and would sell posting paper and TV material at cost.



Another agent, Leon Pickett, had been on the road for a number of weeks, working from a list of 140 arenas. He found that about 40 percent of them were too small for the Ringling show as it was framed. The show wanted venues with 6,000 or more seats. A major factor was that Ringling's floats, elephants, horses and carriages required a lot of storage space.

Ringling was working with local promotion men in several cities as some of the buildings contracted were not in position to handle their own promotions.

Once the show was contracted the responsibilities fell largely to Eddie Belletti, the general superintendent. Having been with the Polack indoor show for years Belletti was familiar with rigging problems in buildings.

The main feature of the indoor aerial rigging was that it required only six ceiling connections. From them was suspended a tubular frame measuring 45 by 45 feet, with flexible width. The central part was an end-to-end trio of flying return riggings totaling 45 feet in length. Extending from each side were supports for the other types of acts. This accounted for all but the high wire rigging, which used poles from the floor. This rigging was separate from the out-

Mack tractor No. 229 and semi No. 129 carried the outdoor rigging. Pfening Archives.

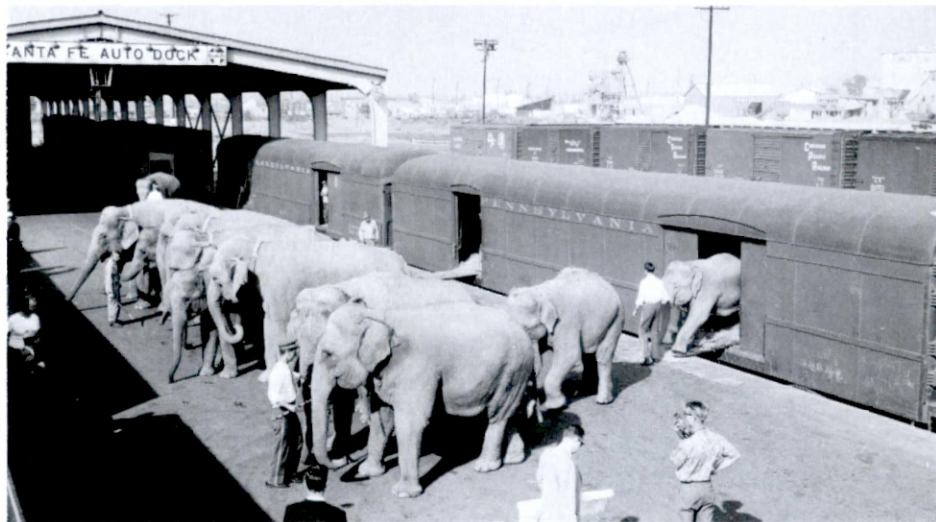
door rigging that had been designed by Concello.

Also of importance was the show's new rubber flooring. One hundred twenty-six yellow mats, each measuring 6 by 20 feet, were to be placed over the building floor to eliminate the use of dirt, small mats or changes in the flooring. The new mats worked well in New York, giving good footing to all types of acts as well as protecting the surface. The mats could be easily rolled up and removed at far less cost than hauling in and removing dirt.

The color of the mats was selected by Miles White. While aesthetically pleasing, the light color quickly soiled and became unattractive. Concello ordered more practical green mats which were used from that time on.

The show was making other personnel changes. The road press staff was headed by Howard Y. Bary. Frank Braden, A. J. Clarke and Reginald Denenholz, who had worked the New York stand were given

Following the Boston stand seventeen elephants were moved in Pennsylvania Railroad balloon baggage cars. Bob MacDougall collection.





The outdoor rigging used in ball parks and at fairs. Pfening Archives.

two weeks notice. The show was cut 300 employees after playing New York and Boston. A no strike pact was signed with the Teamsters union.

The May 6 *Billboard* reported that the Madison Square Garden stand produced a gross of \$1,800,000. Intense television advertising had a remarkably positive effect on the matinee attendance. The advance sale in Boston was smaller than in the past.

Norman Carroll was to join the show to handle radio and TV press work in conjunction with Bary. They were to be three to five weeks ahead of the show. Far more press passes were to be issued than in recent years. In New York 9,000 requests for seating were filled by the press department.

The second section pulled out of Sarasota under the direction of Eddie Belletti for the Providence date. Included was a large semi-trailer to carry small cages for the wild animal act. The winter quarters were to remain open for tourist business.

The May 20 *Billboard* told of the upcoming annual meeting of the Ringling-Barnum board of directors at which management was expected to ask for the stockholders for permission to sell such equipment as the railroad cars, show wagons and other equipment used by the circus.

An earlier plan to sell such equipment was blocked when the 49ers reminded management that their permission was required before sales could be made and that this permission was not forthcoming.

It was understood that Concello favored keeping the equipment at least until the success or failure of the indoor show was proven.

It was stated that even if the directors should give an okay this time, it was presumed that no sale would be completed until later in the year, when the indoor dates had been completed.

The May 14-19 Boston Garden run brought only a \$150,000 gross, \$250,000 being the norm in previous years. On May 21 the show-owned cars loaded with the side show, menagerie and all elephants other than those performing were sent back to Sarasota. The performing elephants, horses and rigging were moved

Gala Shawn, featured trapeze performer in 1957. Fred Pfening photo.



by three system baggage cars to Providence where the new format debuted. Three coaches carried the personnel. The six system cars continued to be used all season.

During the Boston engagement all of the spec floats were cut down. The standard size tires were removed and replaced with small balloon tires, allowing them to be loaded in semi-trailers.

The June 3 *Billboard* reported on the first road stand: "Good attendance in small buildings takes show off nut, but profit small.

"Rochester, New York. Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus now has completed the first of its new-style stands and on Wednesday (29) here it was ready to start the second.

"Circus business was watching closely to see how the show fared under its new set-up of playing lengthened stands in arenas.

"The initial try, Providence, Rhode Island drew good houses throughout the stand until the final day, Sunday (26), which show press man Ken Mayo said was light. He termed other days unusually good attendance and said show management was optimistic for the new system as a result.

"However, seating capacity of the Rhode Island Auditorium, operated by Louis Pieri, is rated at about 5,200 for the circus. This is short of the capacity the show usually considers its minimum. Thus, while the attendance was good for the building, the show did not make any great profits. The stand paid its way, it was reported,

"A narrow door to the building required reorganizing the spec so that people entered in one group and the elephants and floats entered in another. Normally all would be interspersed.

"Providence publicity was very strong in the newspapers, with full pages of photos included in two newspapers. Opposition ads were placed by the Shrine-Grotto Circus scheduled for June 10-15. These ads listed Victor Julian, Unus, Pat Anthony, Joe Basile and other acts and quoted lower admission prices.

"On opening night in Rochester a staff man for the local promotion group said the advance sale was fair.

"Meanwhile, the show has altered its performance and running order since leaving the two Gardens of New York and Boston. The revised program follows: Display 1 Trevor Bale, tiger act. 2 Clown walk-around. 3 Antoinette Bisbini, Rixos, Los Platos, Elizabeth Nock, the Ninons. 4 diving act. 5 Elephants in three rings. 6 Otto Griebing. 7 Gala Shawn and web number. 8 Clowns. 9 Tonito, Dobritch and Nocks, wire acts. 10 Loyal Troupe, Bostock Parents and Kristianens, bare-

back riding. 11 Clown army. 12 Hugo Schmitt's elephant, zebra and guanaco. 13 Namba, head jumps. 14 Trevors, bikes; Goetchis, bikes and wire; Hanel, casting. 15 Lou Jacobs' clown car. 16 Bob Top and Lauron, skating. 17 Coronation of Mother Goose, spec.

"After intermission: Display 18 Flying return. 19 Clowns. 20 Lottie Brunn, juggling; Marilex, Bisbinis. 21 Clown Atom Smasher. 22 Saratoga Racing Ball of 1913, Liberty, dressage and equipage number with the Mroczkowskis and Marion Seifert. 23 Otto Griebing. 24 Sciplini's Chimps. 25 Del Morales, Canesterillis and Los Aguilar, perch. 26 Paul Wenzel's clown house afire. 27 Yong Brothers and Sister, the Freddis, the Bokaras. 28 The Alzanas. 29 Carnival in Venezuela, finale."

Dropped after New York and Boston were: Rix bears; Lolita Perez and Dam brothers, wire; Ivanov, acrobatic; Colleanos and Hodgini, dogs; Rosario and Kayarets; Young China and Tokayers.

Providence was the first stand under Howard Y. Bary's press direction. Ken Mayo and Harry Davis joined the press staff and also worked Providence. Band-leader Izzy Cervone, his trumpet playing nephew Jack and drummer Don Knapp were to travel with the show. Local union musicians were to be used in arenas under the jurisdiction of the American Federation of Musicians. Sixteen locals were used in Boston and 13 were hired for Providence. The size of the band varied from city to city. Every financial corner possible was being cut.

The 1957 outdoor show moved on the following motorized units:

1956 Chevrolet station wagon used by Harold Genders.

1956 Chevrolet station wagon used by Lloyd Morgan.

1956 Ford station wagon used by Arthur Concello.

1956 Chevrolet bus used for office. Former gilly bus in 1956.

No. 228 1947 Chevrolet, pulled van semi, unknown contents.

No. 229 1956 GMC straight truck, carried lights, former laundry truck.

No. - 1955 Chevrolet straight truck, shop and welding, formerly used to carry advance elephant.

No. 230 1957 Chevrolet 2 ton tractor, painted red, pulled drop frame semi carrying wardrobe.

No. 231 1957 Chevrolet 2 ton tractor, painted red, pulled drop frame semi carrying wardrobe.

No. 232 1957 Chevrolet 2 ton tractor, painted green, pulled auto transport semi with spec floats.

No. 233 1952 Mack, pulled van semi loaded with trunks, props and elephant department.

No. 234 1951 Mack, pulled van semi

loaded with props and elephant tent.

No. 235 1953 Mack, pulled semi with tiger act cages and arena.

No. 236 1957 Chevrolet 2 ton tractor, painted green, pulled auto transport semi with floats.

No. 238 1950 Mack, pulled van semi with indoor rigging.

No. 239 1947 Mack, pulled van semi with outdoor rigging.

No. 254 1955 Mack, former menagerie canvas truck, carried rubber mats.

1953 Chevrolet panel advance truck.

Kristensen riding act horse semi trailer.

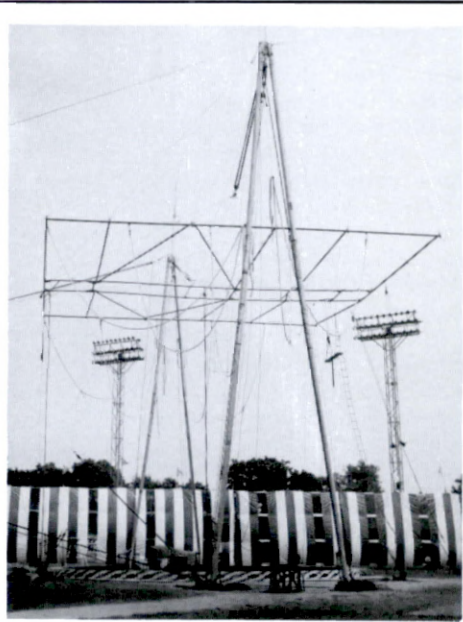
The two drop frame furniture semis No. 130 and 131, the office bus and the tiger semi were the only units that were lettered with the show title. Some of the van semis were stenciled "Ringling Bros. Circus, Sarasota, Florida."

All of the Mack trucks were numbered, but not all of Chevrolet trucks. Some of the semi-trailers were numbered and some were not.

In addition, three Pennsylvania Railroad balloon baggage cars carried elephants, horses and rigging. The personnel traveled in three system coaches.

At the annual stockholders and directors meeting in New York City on June 12 Stuart Lancaster was elected vice-president. This provided him with an official position as spokesman for the minority stockholders. Concello was elected a director, filling a place on the board left vacant after the resignation of George D. Woods some months before. John Ringling North was re-elected chairman of the board and president and Henry Ringling North was elected vice-president and secretary. No action was taken at the meet-

Trevor Bale working the tiger act in 1957. Pfening Archives.



Four A frames supported the two sets of outdoor aerial rigging. Pfening Archives.

ing to allow the sale of any of the under canvas equipment although it had been a serious point of contention earlier.

After Rochester the show played Hershey, Pennsylvania; Portsmouth, Virginia; Raleigh, Charlotte and Winston-Salem, North Carolina in June.

Tiger trainer Trevor Bale gave two week's notice in Charlotte and Concello said he would bring Franz Trubka from Europe to take over the show-owned wild animal act. Olli Kristensen sustained injuries when she fell from the aerial rigging in Charlotte. About the same time Elizabeth Nock fell from her tight wire and was out of the performance for a brief time. Belletti left and was replaced by Eddie Ward as superintendent. The Canestrelli act returned to the show.

The show played Roanoke, Virginia July 2-3. The date was promoted by Irvin and Israel Feld's Super Shows, headquartered in Washington, D. C. The Felds termed the stand "very successful," according to the July 8 *Billboard*. One of the brothers said that they would know the following week whether they would be associated with the new set of Ringling dates. This initial connection with the mighty Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey organization would ultimately lead to the Felds owning the circus.

At the first outdoor stand at a Baltimore, Maryland ball park on July 8-10, the outdoor rigging was first used. Next came Washington D. C. where the show appeared in Griffith Stadium, another Feld date. Springfield, Massachusetts was next.

The July 23-28 stand in Philadelphia's Connie Mack Stadium brought only fair business. The show was out of season there as it had played the city under canvas for decades around the end of May. The Felds joined with local promoter Al Wilde in handling the date. The two had previously teamed together there to handle jazz concerts.

The August 5 *Billboard* reported that the August route had been booked, thus filling the vacant time between Philadelphia and Toronto on August 26-31. The intervening weeks had been a subject of speculation with some observers believing the show would lay off during that time. The fill-in route did, however, involve layoffs of three or four days between several stands. For example the show exhibited only 19 days in July and 17 in August.

The show played Albany, New York August 2-4. Toledo, Ohio was supposed to be next, but Syracuse, New York was played instead. The show was again without a tiger trainer in Syracuse. Vincent Dorr, who had replaced Trevor Bale, was found walking near MacArthur Stadium in a dazed condition. He was sent by show security men to a local hospital for observation. Dorr, an experienced trainer, had worked the tiger act in Philadelphia and Albany.

The Syracuse outdoor stand was a loser because of rain. In addition it had only been booked fifteen days in advance and there was little time for advertising. The local Shrine, Cristiani Bros. and Mills Bros. all had been in ahead of Ringling as well.

After a four day layoff Ringling was in Columbus, Ohio August 16-18. The Columbus date, again promoted by the Felds, was in Jet Stadium, ironically next door to the Mound Street show grounds where Ringling had appeared for decades. Heading back north toward Toronto the show was in Youngstown, Ohio August 21-23 at the Canfield fair grounds. This was the first grandstand engagement for the show. Howard Y. Bary left the show following the date. Both Columbus and Youngstown provided strong business.

During the Toronto stand, the *Wall Street Journal* sent a reporter there for a story that appeared in its August 28 issue which said that even without the big top or side show, the circus was still in business. "The Ringling Brothers slashes its overhead and performs indoors or under the open sky."

"There are visual changes in the reincarnation. Step behind the scenes for a



Twenty-four sheet billboard advertising the San Francisco stand at the Cow Palace. Pfenig Archives.

moment to notice that: The 80 car circus train has been reduced to three baggage cars and fifteen trailer trucks; the payroll has been cut from 1,300 to about 300 personnel, and the expensive operation of supplying employees with room, board and transportation has been done away with entirely. All in all the circus has reduced its daily operation costs from \$25,000 to \$3,000.

"We were operating deep in the red when we closed it down last year," says dapper Harry S. Dube, national routing director, "but now we're very much in the black. The worst part of the season—July and August—is mostly over and each month so far has been profitable."

"Mr. Dube credits this turn-table operation to Arthur Concello, inventor of circus equipment, trainer of trapeze artists and executive director of the show. Mr. Concello resigned in 1953 'when he saw the circus couldn't go on as it was,' said Mr. Dube, 'and he didn't come back last year until he had a signed contract with Mr. North giving him carte blanche to all operations of the circus.'"

"Ringling Brothers insists that despite the economy moves, the show itself is just as lavish as ever. 'It's the same length (2 1/2 hours) and we have just as many acts,' Mr. Dube says. 'In 1955 we spent \$1,600,000 to purchase acts, buy costumes and pay for other production costs. This year we paid \$2,000,000 for the same things. We even have the same number of girls (60).'"

The August 19 *Billboard* reported: "Plans for the Ringling-Barnum show to play Mexico City for 32 days starting December 5, were announced by

Harry S. Dube, who recently returned from Mexico.

"The circus will enter Mexico from Laredo, Texas, after it plays San Antonio. The show will move by railroad baggage cars, and will then pick up its motorized equipment to play again in the United States."

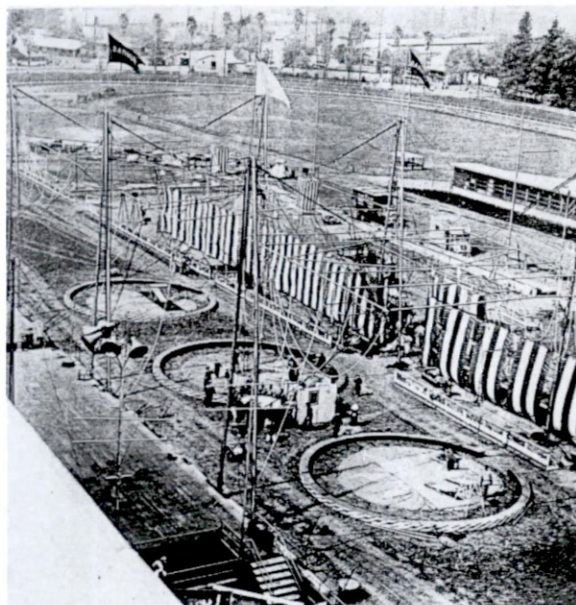
"A Spanish language edition of the program will be published and all posters, newspaper copy and radio-TV material will be done in Spanish."

Ringling allowed four days for the long run from Toronto to Denver where the show played September 5-8. The extensive jump was made in good time and almost without incident. One of the semi-trailers failed to show up in Denver on time. A check revealed that it was parked in St. Louis and that another driver would have to be sent back to get it. Luck was with the show as the truck carried the outdoor rigging which was not needed at the Denver Coliseum. Some of the show's cages and floats participated in a parade on September 5. Clowns Felix and Amelia Adler had come in ahead to do advance work.

Trevor Bale returned to handle the tiger act. He was training Sven Kristiansen to work the act. Bale was to stay about a month. Tony Steele, trapeze triple somersaulter, had joined the show in Toronto. He and Fay Alexander were both trying triples at each performance.

After six day layoff the show exhibited

Aerial view of the show set up at a fair-ground race track. Bob MacDougall collection.



in Pomona, California for the Los Angeles County Fair, September 13-22. Near capacity audiences crowded the grandstand where only one show was given most days. A steam calliope borrowed from Disneyland was used on the fairgrounds to bally the circus. The outdoor rigging remained up during the 10 days without interfering with the horse races in the afternoons. Ringling played only half the fair, Gene Autry coming in for the second half. During the Pomona date the show took up the third option period of the performers contracts which guaranteed least 10 weeks work and would add up to a 30 week season, with more to follow Mexico City.

After Pomona the show played Sacramento, Oakland and San Francisco. Ringling had a turn-away in Oakland before moving across the bay to the Cow Palace in San Francisco. The show had played the building before so citizens there were used to the location. Tickets were priced at \$3.50, with kids being admitted for \$2.75. The San Francisco stand produced a \$115,000 gross. Continuing the revolving door status of the tiger presenter, Joe Horwath took over from Bale.

The show ran a three-quarter page advertisement in the October 7 *Billboard* which read: "From coast to coast from Toronto to Mexico City it's still the Greatest Show on Earth. Now booking 1958-1959 seasons, contact Harry S. Dube, national director."

Following San Diego Ringling played Gilmore Stadium in Los Angeles, October 15-20. Werner Buck's Show Management, Inc. handled the promotion and sold all opening night box seats out in advance. It was reported that 1,000 motion picture, television and radio celebrities, and press people attended the first performance. Ticket prices in Los Angeles were scaled from \$2 to \$3.50 for adults. By the final day the gross had climbed to \$121,000. Together with the Pomona stand, also promoted by Buck, the show had taken a quarter of a million dollars out of the Los Angeles area. Concession stands had done more business there than other dates. John North was on the show in Los Angeles. Norman Carroll handled press in his home town.

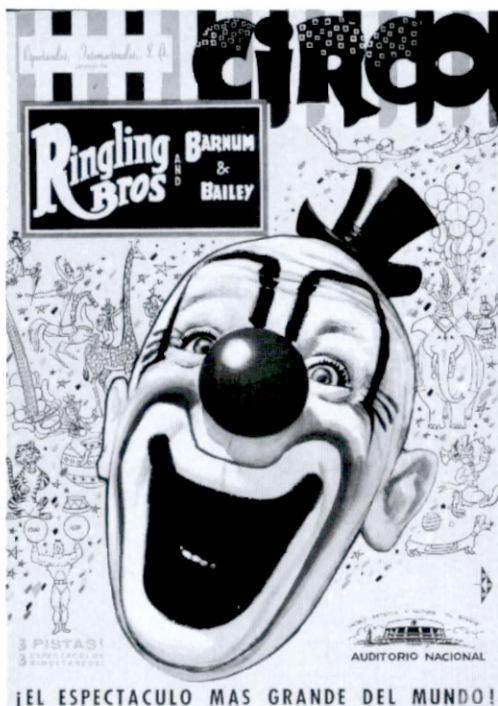
After a five day layoff the show played Phoenix from October 25-27. The municipal ball park there did not turn out to be a good location and business was light. Otto Griebing left the show in Phoenix.

The November 4 *Billboard* told of the Mexico City date: "Plans are taking shape for the show's venture into Mexico. As it stands now all equipment will make the 914 mile jump from San Antonio to Mexico City using railroad baggage cars.

No semi-trailer trucks will be used. Three days are to be allowed for the move.

"It is likely that the show will take its outdoor rigging to Mexico, although the stand is to be inside the Arena Mexico. Riggers and staff men reportedly believe the indoor rigging could not be used successfully there. The outdoor rigging is hung on a ground based frame and does not require and ceiling beams or other fixtures.

"Lloyd Morgan flew to Mexico City from Los Angeles to join general agent Harry Dube. They both rejoined the show in Los Angeles."



Cover of program printed in Mexico City for the one month stand there. Pfening Archives.

Albuquerque followed Phoenix. The show then played El Paso, Lubbock, Waco, Dallas and San Antonio. Business was disappointing in Albuquerque, Lubbock and El Paso, the latter being promoted by the Felds. One of Charles Moroski's liberty horses was injured in Lubbock and had to be destroyed.

The November 25 *Billboard* told of an extended season: "A revolutionary new route January through June has been set up for Ringling-Barnum.

"It calls for the 1958 show to play five engagements prior to its opening in Madison Square Garden, New York. This marks virtually the first time the show has opened any place other than New York.

"The route calls for six stands across the South to bring the 1957 edition out of

Mexico and back to the Sarasota quarters by mid-February. An earlier route was cancelled.

"Details, as reported by general manager Arthur Concello, have the show completing its Mexico City date on January 6. Subsequently, the show will play Shreveport, Louisiana, January 16-19; Little Rock, January 21-23; Memphis, January 24-26; Montgomery, Alabama, January 28-29; Tampa, January 31-February 2, and Miami, February 6-9.

"After closing the 1957 show at Miami Ringling will go to Sarasota and layoff until February 15. Rehearsals will be February 15 to 28.

"Then comes the pre-New York route for the 1958 circus. Opening will be at Charlotte Coliseum, Charlotte, North Carolina, March 8-9. The circus will arrive at Charlotte earlier and rehearse there March 3, 4 and 5. Then the show will play Winston-Salem, Raleigh, Baltimore and Providence. The New York engagement will be April 2 to May 11."

The performance was augmented for the Mexico City date. The Albert Rix bear act returned, as did Lolita Perez, the Dam brothers, the Handels, Ivanovs, the Schuman and Hodgini dog acts, the Kayarts, and Young China troupe. All of these acts had been used in New York and Boston. A Spanish program listed Trevor Bale as again handling the tiger act.

The Greatest Show on Earth drew big business in Mexico City at the Auditorio Nacional, seating 17,5000. Its stage layout was not as ideal as the Arena Mexico, the previously announced building.

During the Mexico City stand the route was revised. After Mexico would be Shreveport, January 17-19; Little Rock, January 24-26; Nashville, January 23-30; Montgomery, February 1-2; and the Florida State Fair at Tampa, February 5-7. The final stand was to be at a ball park in Miami, February 13-16. There was suggestion that two additional Florida locations were being considered between Tampa and Miami. However in an odd turn of events the show went into Sarasota and laid off from February 8-12.

Reshuffling of the big show proved to have been a wise decision financially in spite of the limited number of days played. Ringling was back on its feet, led by Art Concello's strong leadership and the surprising successful routing by program publisher Harry S. Dube. The policy of using outside promoters had worked well and would continue to be the norm in following seasons.

Some information for this article was provided by the Circus World Museum, Walter Heist, Robert MacDougall, Tony Conway and Gordon Turner.

The shows which survived the 1939 season, the second poor one in a row, were in their quarters ready to experience one of roughest and coldest winters on record and then try it once more. That season killed off Downie Bros. and Parker & Watts, two of the largest motorized shows. Neither toured again. A third large mudder, Russell Bros., wintering at Donna, Texas, was virtually broke and unable to return to its usual quarters in Rolla, Missouri. It was able to go out in 1940, making fairly rapid recovery.

Bud Anderson and his show were in the Emporia, Kansas quarters. The first news of Anderson came in the January 6, 1940 *Billboard*: "Anderson personnel feted: New animals due from India. Emporia, Kansas, December 30."

"A Christmas party and turkey dinner was given the personnel of the Bud E. Anderson Circus at the leading hotel here by Mr. and Mrs. Anderson. In keeping with a practice established by Anderson in wagon shows, each employee was remembered individually."

"At Oakley, Kansas, Ria, a giant Bactrian camel, added to the camel population with a blessed event. The new one was christened Annie Oakley. Ria was one of four camels en route from Albuquerque, New Mexico, to the winter quarters here."

"It had been feared here for some time that the famous Max Gruber Duo, Topsey and Eva, elephant and zebra act, might be broken up due to an injury suffered by Topsey (the zebra) on the road last season. Apprehension was relieved last week when Topsey was removed to the animal hospital at the Kansas State Agricultural

Anderson trucks lined up on opening day in Emporia. Luke Anderson collection.

Bud E. Anderson's JUNGLE ODDITIES and CIRCUS

SEASON OF 1940

BY JOSEPH BRADBURY
AND FRED D. PFENING, JR.

College in Manhattan and the attending veterinarian made an encouraging diagnosis. Anderson reported that Topsey would undergo an operation and that the school surgeon indicated she would be as good as new when she returned home soon.

"The cargo of animals en route from India was valued at \$30,000. Anderson will dispatch a truck with heated trailer to Hoboken, New Jersey on New Year's Day to return the cargo overland to winter quarters. Mac MacDonald, boss elephant man, and Matt Laurish were slated to make the trip, laying over a few hours in Chicago to attend the Orrin Davenport Shrine Circus."

The January 4, 1940 *Emporia Weekly Gazette* reported that Topsey the zebra died of surgical shock at the veterinary hospital at Kansas State College. The animal had been operated the day before for a rupture sustained in 1939 when she rolled over on a tent stake. The Max Gruber act would not work again.

A week later the *Billboard* said that Anderson received a pair of Great Dane pups from P. J. McDonald, prominent business man of East Grand Forks, Minnesota. Also it was reported that Alvin Spikes, boss builder at the Anderson

quarters, was forced to abandon outside activities because of a severe snow storm.

Few sections of the country were spared the vicious winter weather, especially in January. The first named author, then a college student way down south at the University of Georgia in Athens, and brooding over the continuing sad circus situation in the country, woke up one morning in late January to find a record twelve inch snow on the ground which remained in spots for weeks. The winter of 1939-40 was one to forget.

A piece in the January 30 *Billboard* was headed: "Mrs. Anderson goes to Mexico in search of acts." She made the trip with Mr. and Mrs. Garnet Keough and family, widely known circus fans from Austin, Minnesota. Keough, a recognized authority on horses, was to inspect some stock in Mexico for the show. They were scheduled to visit the Parker & Watts Circus at South Fort Smith, Arkansas; Russell Bros. at Donna, Texas and the Gainesville Community Circus at Gainesville, Texas before returning to Emporia.

Another note in the article advised that Bert E. Rickman, equestrian director, wired from New York the prior week that the show's cargo of animals from India, originally due to arrive in December, was now scheduled to arrive January 16. Mac MacDonald and Matt Laurish arrived in New York January 3 with equipment to transport the cargo to quarters overland. A stop-over was planned in Cincinnati to

Circus fan John Thiele and Bud Anderson on opening day 1940. John Thiele photo.



allow Charles Wirth and others on the *Billboard* to see the baby elephants.

News of Anderson's animal imports appeared in the January 22, 1940 *Emporia Daily Gazette*: "Marks of a hard sea voyage from India and a cold overland journey from New York are evident on the new animals of the Bud E. Anderson circus which have arrived at the show's quarters.

"The consignment shipped from Burma in November included three baby elephants, two 10-foot snakes, or pythons and two small panda, or red cat bears.

"One of the pandas died at sea. All of the elephants, which are only a few months past the two year old weaning age, have big protruding back bones. Because the tramp freighter on which the animals were shipped arrived in New York several weeks behind schedule, Mr. Anderson believes their food supply ran short at sea. The small elephants, measuring from four feet, two inches to four feet, seven inches tall, appear to be 'kittenish,' even if they have been underfed.

"The surviving panda, less than a year old, is about the size of a fox. The hair about the babyish face is a light cream color, with dark markings. The body is cinnamon brown and the feet and legs are black.

"Mr. Anderson believes no other circus has such an animal to exhibit. He said the loss of the panda's mate was covered by insurance, but he would rather have had the panda than the insurance money.

"The large snakes apparently survived the voyage without any evidence of sea sickness, but the cold trip to Emporia from New York by truck was hard on them.

"When the animals were unloaded at the show's quarters the snakes appeared to be frozen to death. Circus employes uncoiled them, but the reptiles did not move.

"Several circus workers were discussing

The Anderson show on opening day in Emporia, Kansas. Luke Anderson collection.



how to skin the snakes and tan their hides when Anderson arrived and put the pythons in a tub of warm water. They revived and are now being kept close to a stove in the animal barn.

"A fourth baby elephant consigned to the Philadelphia zoo died at sea."

The three baby elephants were named India, Bunny and Burma.

The January 23 *Emporia Daily Gazette* told of the death of the panda: "Bud Anderson's \$1,000 panda is dead. Circus attendants reported the good looking, baby cat-bear imported from India, ate a hearty meal Monday and played around in its cage, but they found the animal dead at 4 o'clock.

"Mr. Anderson believes the delicate animal could not withstand the rigors of a 76-day sea voyage and a 4-day truck trip from New York to Emporia. The loss was not covered by insurance. The panda's mate died at sea, but was insured. Anderson said that he had written his animal agent for two more pandas.

"The loss of the panda is the heaviest loss from death sustained by Anderson since he has been in the circus business. He is arranging to have the hide of the panda tanned.

"The three young elephants and two large snakes which arrived here Friday with the panda after shipment from India are in good condition."

The circus world finally got word on

Baby elephant India on her tricycle in front of the former Max Gruber elephant semi. Albert Conover collection.

the Anderson animal shipment and much of it was not good. The February 10 *Billboard* reported: "Anderson's pandas dead: orders more. Emporia, Kansas, February 3. Bud Anderson's highly prized pandas are dead. Death claimed one at sea and the other three days following arrival in quarters here after a 70 day sea voyage from India and a 4 day truck trip from New York. He cabled his agent for two more to be sent on the next boat.

"The shipment of animals included three baby elephants and two giant rock pythons and all were transported from New York to Emporia in a special heated truck by Mac MacDonald and Matt Laurish, arriving here January 30.

"The elephants are a few months over two years of age and approximately four feet tall. MacDonald reported that they are well and happy in their new home and stood the long sea voyage and sub zero temperature overland in good shape. The pythons survived the trip without any evidence of sickness and are in fine condition.

"Mrs. Anderson returned this week from Old Mexico where she contracted a feature act. The Henry Duo, Arthur and Marie, was signed this week. Bert E. Rickman, equestrian director, returned last week from New York City, reporting that he will have many surprises in the way of wardrobe for the opening and closing specs. Norman Anderson and wife, Frances, are in Emporia again after an extended trip through the South."

In early February it was announced that Jack Kofron, bandmaster of the Anderson show the past season, would again have the band, making his eighth season with Anderson. Kofron would use 14 men.

The snakes, however, were doing fine. A note in the local paper on February 12 said: "A 12 foot python imported by Bud Anderson ate its 10th chicken since January 18. The big snake dined Saturday af-





Bud Anderson with his eight elephants Babe, Eva, Modoc, Empress, Judy, India, Bunny and Burma in Yates Center, Kansas, April 20, 1940. Mac MacDonald is standing behind Anderson. Pfening Archives.

ter eating two chicken Friday. Each of the chickens devoured weighed about two pounds. A smaller 10 foot python has not eaten anything since it arrived here. While the snake is lively, it has not molested chickens put in its box."

The February 17 *Billboard* provided some interesting information on Anderson's plan for the new season. The piece was headed: "American spec for Anderson show. The Bud Anderson Circus will turn to American history for its 1940 opening spec by presenting an American Cavalcade, a pageant written and costumed by Bert Rickman. In it Rickman has captured the rhythm of the times. The spec has a patriotic flavor accentuated by the histrionic displays to be presented in exotic colors and lighting effects. Dancing girls, dancing horses, and dancing elephants will be featured in depicting sketches of Americana as told in the language of the circus.

"According to Anderson several acts have been contracted. Among those are the Henry Duo (Arthur 'Bum' and Marie) and the Coriell Family. Clyde Widener, his wife, Frances, and daughter, Dora, will be in the wild west concert.

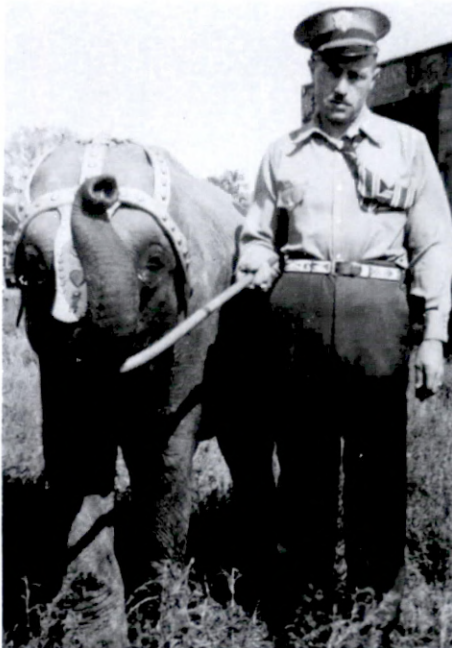
"The continuous bad weather is causing the show's building program to lag. Activity in the horse department was increased to full schedule this week by Matt Laurish. Mac MacDonald, superintendent of elephants, is schooling his new wards from India with much success."

A major tragedy hit the circus world February 24 when the Cole Bros. Circus quarters in Rochester, Indiana was destroyed by fire. Loss to both property and animals was extensive. The destruction of

most of the parade wagons meant there would be no street parade in 1940, a major feature of the Adkins and Terrell railroad show since its beginning in 1935. The Ringling-owned quarters in nearby Peru, Indiana were made available to Cole Bros. to prepare for the new season. Both animals and equipment were obtained from Ringling and as a result the show went out on schedule using 25 cars, five more than in 1939. Ringling-Barnum, the nation's other railer, also increased its car total from 80 to 90.

The March 9 *Billboard* reported a motion picture of the Bud E. Anderson Circus had begun a few days earlier by the Western Production Co. of Kansas City for a spring release. Anderson and his Arabian stallion, Pal, were the principal actors in the film. Mac MacDonald and

Mac MacDonald and Little India in 1940. Pfening Archives.



Matt Laurish were also in the cast, working the show's performing stock. Other notes said the show opened its uptown offices that week in the New Willis Hotel in Emporia. Anderson gave his final O.K. on a new white canvas padroom that would be 30 by 100 feet. R. S. Reed, recently with Downie Bros., had been signed to assist Alvin Spikes in the building department and the Aerial Lakes were contracted recently. William Mitchell, superintendent of transportation, and wife, Evelyn, arrived in quarters from Florida. F. L. Anders, legal adjuster, was expected to arrive soon from Florida where he had been wintering.

Further animal news appeared in the March 14 *Emporia Weekly Gazette*: "Quadruplet lion cubs were born at the Anderson circus headquarters.

"The young cubs, named Eeney, Mee-ney, Miney and Moe, weigh about six pounds and are about the size of a small cat.

"Circus visitors may see the cubs Easter Sunday, but no persons are permitted to see them now because visitors sometimes frighten a young mother lion, causing her to eat her young."

One of the cubs died a week after birth; it appeared the mother had accidentally crushed the cub.

Nothing further appeared in the *Billboard* in March with exception of the following ad in the March 23 issue: "Baby Elephants for sale. New shipment will arrive New York end of May. Write Bud E. Anderson, Emporia, Kansas."

No elephants were sold as all three toured with the show in 1940.

A short note in the April 6 *Emporia Daily Gazette* said visitors would be welcome at the Anderson winter quarters the following Sunday, the last Sunday before the show left on tour. The prior Sunday 1,000 people visited the quarters to see various animal act rehearsals.

The April 6 *Billboard* headlined its coverage of the show's activities: "Anderson building, personnel doubled. The personnel in the building department of Bud E. Anderson's Circus, which will open April 12-13 under auspices of the PTA, has been doubled. Return of winter weather, which held sway until recently, delayed outdoor activities, but work is now proceeding rapidly.

"John D. Foss, general agent, returned to quarters Tuesday from an extended trip to confer with Anderson. Foss began contracting towns the latter part of the week. Anderson purchased a new saddle recently from a Hollywood saddler for \$2,500. It was scheduled for delivery April 2.



Anderson with baby elephant Little India during a downtown bally in Yates Center, Kansas. The highly decorated side show semi with band is behind him. Pfening Archives.

"The restyled big top will be delivered soon. All canvas will be new. The show has a specially designed line of paper.

"Some of the department heads are; Frank (Kokomo) Anders, legal adjuster and assistant manager; Bert E. Rickman, equestrian director; John Lynn, superintendent; Mrs. Laura Anderson, treasurer; Clifford Brooks, bandmaster (a change from the original announcement); Alvin Spikes, boss canvas man; Leon Bennett, manager Jungle Oddities and side show; Vern Crawford, privileges; Matt Laurish, suptintendent of ring stock; Mac MacDonald, superintendent of elephants; Tye Cobb, cookhouse superintendent; William Mitchell, superintendent of transportation; Marley, electrician; Norman Anderson, banners; Elmer Myers, assistant on banners; Margaret Espy, tickets in red wagon; Jackie Wilcox and Bob Hope, lithographers; Charles Stuckey, boss billposter; Joe Murphy and Ed Harris, billposters. William Harris will have the pit show."

Another item in the same issue advised that Joe B. Webb, formerly with Anderson's Seal Bros. Circus, was again to be on Anderson's staff. He had been with Parker & Watts in 1938 and 1939.

An extensive article appeared in the April 8 Emporia Daily Gazette about Jimmy Hackensmith, a clown on the Anderson circus.

"There's nothing funny about infantile paralysis, but the world might have been deprived of many a laugh if Jimmy Hack-

ensmith hadn't had that di-ease when he was three years old.

"Jimmy, now producing clown of the Anderson circus, was 16 years old when he got his first clowning job. He landed the job because because the circus manager noticed he had a 'comical walk.' The walk was the result of infantile paralysis.

"Jimmy makes his own clown shoes which weigh five pounds apiece. The clown cop, as he is usually featured, started doing the unusual early in life. At age 12, he made his first parachute jump from an old-fashioned gas-filled balloon.

"He started in 1915 with the Hagenbeck-Wallace show as a canvasman at age 15. He has clowning on Hagenbeck-Wallace, Al. G. Barnes and Cole Bros. circuses."

The article appears to have been a press handout.

The 1940 circus season had arrived and would see the fewest number of shows on the road in many, many years. Motorized

Anderson ad in Emporia Daily Gazette on April 3, 1940. Kansas State Historical Society collection.



The new 1940 marquee with Anderson's picture. Pfening Archives.

shows included Russell Bros., Wallace Bros., Bud Anderson, Haag Bros., Mills Bros., Hunt's, Bell Bros., Kelly-Miller, McCall Bros. Dog and Pony, Rowe Bros., Lewis Bros., Yankee Patterson, and Atterbury Bros. Some on the list were out only a short time. Ray Rogers' show, again titled Wallace Bros. (it was Barnett Bros. in 1938-39 but had been Wallace in 1937), was the largest of the truck shows. It carried nine elephants. Bud Anderson carried eight on the road, and Russell had three.

The March 28 Emporia Weekly Gazette told of the upcoming opening of the Anderson show: "Preparations for the opening of the 1940 season of Bud E. Anderson's motorized 3-ring circus are being rushed toward completion. The circus will open its season in Emporia, with advance ticket sale sponsored by the Emporia Parent Teacher Association, on Friday and Saturday, April 12 and 13. The posting of bills for the four performances will be started early next week.

"The Anderson circus promises to be one of the largest motorized shows on the road during the 1940 season. Many new properties have been acquired since the close of the 1939 season. About 40 men are at work at the headquarters, 1 1/2 miles east of Emporia, painting and decorating equipment and assembling new properties.

"Few if any motorized circuses have carried as many animals as is promised by the Anderson show this year. The present animal lineup includes eight elephants, six camels and five lions, including three cubs.

"New equipment includes at least seven new trucks to

AMERICA'S MOST BEAUTIFUL HORSES

Bud E. Anderson's

JUNGLE-ODDITIES

3 RING CIRCUS

MAMMOTH WILD ANIMAL DISPLAY
AMERICA'S MOST BEAUTIFUL HORSES
SPECTACULAR PAGEANT NOANS ARK
WORLD'S GREATEST PERFORMING ELEPHANTS
ARENIC STARS FROM SIX NATIONS
4 ACRES OF RAIN PROOF TENTS
14 FAMOUS FUNNY CLOWNS 14
100-NEW ACTS AND SENSATIONS 100
TWICE DAILY-AFTERNOON AND NIGHT
LOWEST PRICES IN BIG CIRCUS HISTORY
Adm. Children 15c, Adults 25c-School Ch. Matinee Friday P. M.

EMPORIA
FRI. APR. 12 & 13
SAT.
 Afternoon & Nite
 Doors Open 1 and 7:00
 Auspices P. T. A.
 MKT Show Grounds



Side show manager Leon Bennett making an opening in Rogers, Arkansas on September 26, 1940. Pfening Archives.



The side show semi with band making a downtown bally. Pfening Archives.

haul semi-trailer outfits; a new side show tent, 170 feet long and 70 feet wide, with new banners; a new horse tent, 100 feet long and 30 feet wide; and a new marquee, or front door for the main show tent. Workmen have built two new semi-trailers."

Before the show opened the *Weekly Gazette* reported on April 4 that Anderson had rented his farm and buildings of his circus headquarters to Arthur Woods. Anderson said he had not sold his quarters, as had been rumored. "The lease agreement," Anderson said, "calls for possession of animal barns on a month's notice and I expect to return the circus to Emporia next fall."

The same issue reported that Frank Beebe had arrived in Emporia to head the bill posting brigade of the Anderson show. The advance crew was to start work in nearby towns putting up advertising displays for the Emporia opening on April 12 and 13.

The April 11 *Daily Gazette* reported: "A fire at the Anderson circus quarters, about 8 o'clock Wednesday night, resulted in the loss of a cub lion, killed by its excited

The Owego pit show opposite the side show on the 1940 Anderson midway. John Thiele photo.

mother when the animal cage was removed from the smoke filled main animal barn.

"The fire occurred in straw and manure outside the barn. Flames as high as the building were reported. Circus employees with fire extinguishers and buckets of water had the fire under control when an Emporia fire truck arrived.

"The elephant herd of eight and other animals were removed from the barn. No damage resulted other than the loss of the baby lion."

The weather did not smile on Anderson the day before the show opened. The April 12 *Emporia Daily Gazette* reported: "Winter came back last night, when the minimum temperature in Lyon county was 21 or 19 degrees. According to the *Gazette's* 21 year weather records, that morning was the coldest April 12 for at least 20 years."

The *Daily Gazette* reported on the opening in its April 13 issue: "Two fair sized crowds saw the two opening performances Friday. Friday nights crowd went to the show grounds with overcoats and blankets, but the verdict was unanimous that Emporia's showman, Bud Anderson, had done it again, meaning that Anderson has an excellent small circus that will highly entertain a crowd for two solid hours.

"The performances were run through smoothly and without interruption, with

no mediocre acts. Popular was the Coriell family, with its outstanding tumbling and balancing acts. A feature was the head slide down a tight wire by the Great Coriell. The Henry Duo, billed as the 'Aristocrats of Tighwire,' also pleased the crowd.

"One of the most popular acts was that of eight trained and performing elephants, which went through stunts under the direction of Mac MacDonald. Featured was Little India, said to be the youngest and smallest performing elephant in America.

"The horse and pony acts were popular. Matt Laurish put the white and black spotted Arabian steeds through their paces, and Clyde Widener directed his troupe of trained ponies.

"The Japanese troupe held the crowd's interest from beginning to end. The Echo Yoshida Trio did some sensational foot juggling of heavy tubs and some high perch balancing feats.

"Some skillful comedy barrel juggling and kicking was done by Charles Dryden.

"Friday's crowd also got a good glimpse of Bud Anderson in his cowboy attire."

On April 15 the *Daily Gazette* com:

The cookhouse semi and dining tent on Anderson in 1940. John Thiele photo.



mented further: "Saturday's crowds at the Kety show grounds were better than anticipated by the circus management. The afternoon crowd was near capacity and the main tent was nearly full for the night exhibition."

"Most of the performance was run off in the center ring and many of the troupe members double in various acts."

"Favored among the acts of the of the herd of eight elephants was the long routine of Eva, who has appeared in shows all over America the past 30 years. This was directed by Mr. Anderson, who states the elephant is so well trained that she would perform for anyone."

"The weakest points in the show, according to several critics, were the ancient clown acts and the wild west concert performance, for which only a 5 cent admission was charged in Emporia."

The *Weekly Gazette* published a final report on the opening in its April 18 issue:



The Yoshidas in front of sleeper trailer in 1940. Pfening Archives.

"Again Emporia sends Bud Anderson and his circus out into the wide world to scatter joy and amusement among the people of our land. Anderson's circus, which winters here, gives the town a thrill every few weeks. New animals are coming in. Baby animals are being born. A fine payroll is maintained, looking after them, painting up the wagons for the parade and trying stunts in the steam heated ring. No other one industry in this town brings as much diversion and delight with it as Bud Anderson's circus. He is a circus man who pays his bills, whose word is good, who is smart enough to know that in his business he must give value received to the public, and he gives it and a lot to boot."

"We are proud of Bud Anderson and this is a testament to say wherever he goes men will meet an honest, straightforward, intelligent circus man who will keep his word and try to give every man he deals with value received."

"So, for another seven months, goodbye Bud, 'take keer of yourself,' Emporia is watching you with pride."

Seven new Chevrolets trucks were bought for the 1940 season. An inventory of the motorized units has not been located, however Luke Anderson remembers these trucks:

No. 1 Water wagon and mechanic's unit, bought from Tom Mix show in 1938.

No. 2 Stake driver, bought from Tom Mix show in 1938.

No. 18 Four wheeled sleeper.

No. 21 Horse semi.

No. - Horse semi.

No. 24 Office ticket wagon, four wheeled trailer pulled by water truck.

No. 26 Seat semi.

No. 30 Straight truck, props, rigging and ring curbs.

No. - Cookhouse semi.

No. 50 Elephant semi.

No. 62 Elephant semi.

No. 64 Horse semi.

No. - Horse semi.

No. 82 Side show semi, used for downtown bally.

No. - Side show poles and canvas.

No. 99 Big top poles and canvas semi.

No. 101 Elephant semi, bought from Tom Mix show in 1938.

No. - Stringers, planks and jacks semi.

No. - Concession semi owned by Luke Anderson.

No. - Straight truck, generator wagon.

No. - Jack Hoxie truck.

After the opening Anderson moved to Harrington, and eleven additional Kansas stands before going into Missouri for a single date at Maryville, April 27. It then went to Iowa for fourteen stands.

The show's initial date was covered in the April 20 *Billboard*: "Cold opening for Anderson. Biz satisfactory despite weather. Governor, editor, are honorary ringmasters."

"The Bud E. Anderson Jungle Oddities and Circus opened here yesterday (April 13) to very satisfactory business despite wintry weather. Hundreds of people lined the streets at noon to watch the parade."

"Kansas governor, Payne E. Rather and the noted Emporia editor, William Allen White, were honorary ringmasters. Emporia's mayor, Frank Lostutter, issued a proclamation declaring April 12 and 13 as



Bum and Marie Henry. The striped horse tent in background came from the Tim McCoy wild west show. Pfening Archives.

Bud E. Anderson Days. The town was in a festive spirit. Flags adorned the streets, schools were dismissed, and some of the larger business firms closed.

"The color scheme used in the big top is consistent with the atmosphere of the show—red, white and blue, with silver trimming in the modern touch."

"The big show performance was in the inimitable Bert Rickman style, a fast tempo, and building to a climactic finish."

"Opening the show was the exotic spec, American Cavalcade, which brought the audience to its feet with applause and cheers. Spec shows the historical growth of America in pageantry with a background of color and music. Clifford S.

The Coriell family of acrobats on Anderson in 1940. Pfening Archives.



Brooks and his band were acclaimed by the audience for excellent rendition of international airs during the pageant.

"The headliner of the animal acts was Mac MacDonald's presentation of India, a baby elephant which rode and peddled a tricycle around the hippodrome track and walked a steel rail mounted high above the track. Matt Laurish gave an unusually fine performance with the show's nine menage horses in an equestrian ballet, and he scored another hit with liberty horses.

"The clowns were headed by Jimmy Mackensmitz. Some of their gags were entirely new and diverting and gave the audience many laughs.

"Everett Coreill of the Coriell troupe had the crowd hushed in suspense when he climbed and descended a series of steps on his head. The Henry Duo turned in their usual brilliant performance. The Echo Yoshida Troupe, Escalando riding act, Henry Duo, and Coriell family are outstanding in the performance.

"Leon Bennett, manager of the side show and animal show, reported a good opening business. His staff includes: Lecturer Larry Benner; ticket seller, Elmer Myers; Neil McCrea's band; William Phillips, and Frances Livingston in charge of girl chorus.

"The big show program:

"Display No. 1 Spec, American Cavalcade, under the direction of Bert E. Rickman.

"No. 2 - Introduction of Bud E. Anderson.

"No. 3 - Matt Laurish's pony drills, assisted by Phil Daniels and Mary O'Brien.

"No. 4 - Traps, featuring Arthur Henry, Dora Widener and Irma Christensen.

"No. 5 - Elephants, five babies, worked by Mac MacDonald; Evey Mitchell working Babe, and Bud E. Anderson working Eva in end rings.

"No. 6 - Web and cloud swings, Coriell, Irma Christensen and Dora Widener.

"No. 7 - Contortion, Arthur Henry; jugglers, Charles Dryden and Thomas Lane.

"No. 8 - Menage. Frances Widener, Matt Laurish, Mary O'Brien, Phil Daniels, Mateel Should and Mac MacDonald.

"No. 9 - Great Eva (elephant) worked by Bud Anderson.

"No. 10 - Head-balancing, Echo Yoshida.

"No. 11 - Rolling globe, Henry Duo.

"No. 12 - Risley and tub, Echo Yoshida Troupe.

"No. 13 - Liberty horses, worked by Matt Laurish.

"No. 14 - Riding act, Escalando Troupe.

"No. 15 - Head slide, Everett Coriell.

"No. 16 - Swinging ladders, Ollie Coriell. Dora Widener, Irma Christensen.

"No. 17 - Elephant India, worked by Mac MacDonald.

Jack Hoxie - Miss Dixie Starr

MOVIE ACTORS

Direct from Hollywood!

With



BUD E. ANDERSON CIRCUS

See \$5,000 Gold and Silver
Mounted Saddles

FREE ON MAIN STREET
AT NOON
BAND CONCERT

HERD OF PERFORMING ELEPHANTS
Baby Elephant Riding Tricycle



DOORS OPEN - 1 P.M. AND 7 P.M.

Rain or Shine--Twice Each Day!

Jack Hoxie handbill used by Anderson in 1940. Pfening Archives.

"No. 18 - Tight-wire, Henry Duo and Carvello Troupe.

"No. 19 - Perch, the Yoshidas.

"No. 20 - Teeterboard and acrobats, Coreill Troupe, Marvellos, and Yoshidas.

"No. 21 - Fire-jumping horses, Matt Laurish, Frances Widener, Mateel Should, Phil Daniels, Mary O'Brien.

"Clown numbers between displays were produced by Jimmy Mackensmitz, assisted by Charley Dryden, Tony Venzici, Mal Burton, Jack Nestor, Tommy Thomas, and Arthur Henry."

When the show opened it carried eight elephants, Gentry Babe, Eva, Modoc, Empress, Judy, Burma, Bunny and India. The last three were newly imported from India. There had been 8 in quarters, the five carried in 1939 plus the three newly imported.

Semi-trailer No. 99, carrying the big top poles and canvas, was new in 1940. John Thiele photo.



Later reviewers, plus the Woodcock files, listed only seven elephants on the show. A 1940 photo, however shows eight. Luke Anderson provided the answer to this mystery when he explained that baby Burma died early in the season.

Little appeared in the trade publication for the next couple of weeks concerning the Anderson show. A photo was published in the May 4 issue picturing Bud, Mrs. Anderson, Norman and his wife, Frances. It was noted that cold and disagreeable weather had persisted into the spring, causing a slow take for most shows.

It was the first season since circus street parades began that no show, rail or motorized, large or small, presented a daily march as a feature of circus day. Bud Anderson did stage a mini parade of sorts by sending the show's band and seven elephants downtown each day. The show's side show semi was attractively decorated and lettered to serve as the bandwagon. At the town square or some appropriate central location the group halted, and while the band played a short concert, the smallest elephant, India, performed a routine, that Mac MacDonald had taught it, of riding a specially built tricycle up and down a city block. It was an excellent show day publicity stunt.

The show moved into South Dakota at Beresford, May 12, exactly a month after the opening and played a total of fifteen dates, the final at Deadwood, May 26. It entered Wyoming at Gillette the following day and remained in the state for fourteen stands.

Anderson placed an ad in the May 18 *Billboard* wanting a boss canvasman, workingmen and a baritone player for the band. In the same issue Paul Van Pool, well known circus fan of Joplin, Missouri, wrote he had recently seen Anderson's show and said it is one of the best motorized shows in the country.

The May 25 *Billboard* headlined a story, "Cold dogs Anderson, but biz holds." Written from Emmetsburg, Iowa where the show played May 9 it said the Anderson circus had cold, rain, sleet, or snow nearly every day since opening, but business had held up, according to Bert Rick-

man. Visitors were on hand nearly every day and a long listing was given. Jack Hoxie, well known movie western actor, and his wife Dixie Starr visited and it was announced they would join the show soon. Hoxie was to put on the concert, bringing eight riders and ropers and six horses with them. Clyde Widener and all others in the wild west would remain. The article also enumerated the staff which included the following personnel who had not been listed previously. Allen Jones, white ticket wagon; A. R. Martin, front door superintendent; and Frank Ellis, privilege car manager and banners.

The next week's *Billboard* ran a photo of Jack Hoxie and Dixie Starr which was captioned: "Soon to join Bud Anderson to put on concert." There was also an interesting article in the same issue by Dr. T. W. Nelson of Princeton, Minnesota: "I can't help telling of my visit on the Anderson show in Brookings, South Dakota on May 16. What a show that man has this year. And the public's response leads me to believe you [*Billboard*] were right when you said 'maybe the public wants circus.' Brook-ings gave Anderson a good day. The kid show was in a new tent with blue and white stripped side wall, with one of the largest and finest lines of attractions I've ever seen on a truck show." The tent had come from the 1938 Col. Tim McCoy Wild West show.

An Anderson advertisement in the June 8 *Billboard* wanted a team doing two or three ground act, also clowns with props, side show acts and dancers, a sail maker and workingmen. It was not unusual for acts to come and go, and obviously some had left Anderson.

The show's initial stand in Wyoming was at Lovell, June 9, then a tour of Montana began the next day at Bridger with several additional dates following. Five North Dakota dates followed starting at Bowman, June 18, and concluding with Beach, June 22. The show returned to Montana the next day at Sidney and for the remainder of the month played back and forth between Montana and North Dakota.

The June 29 *Billboard* carried another Anderson ad wanting performers for the big show, side show dancers, and a boss canvasman. Art Powell and useful people were asked to wire. Three North Dakota stands were listed.

Meanwhile, summer and warmer weather finally came to the country but the mood of the populace became cold and forboding over recent events of the war in Europe. The German successes, first in Norway, then in the Netherlands and France, were stunning. France fell in only six weeks and the British army narrowly escaped from Dunkirk. The world



now awaited the invasion of Great Britain. For many weeks it was a melancholy period, similar to what was to come after Pearl Harbor. Months into the future, however, the events in Europe at last began to awake the American sleeping giant. The Roosevelt administration started defense preparations immediately. In August the national guard was brought into active federal service and later the Lend-Lease act was passed as well as the first peace time draft of young men for the armed services.

With defense industries humming there was an immediate pick up in the economy which translated into better business at circus ticket wagons. In mid summer Ringling-Barnum was even claiming turn-aways at some spots. Cole Bros., after a slow start, began getting a good take and had a most successful tour of the Pacific coast later in the season. It was a presidential election year, which traditionally was poor for the circus business. But this time it was different. It was bad back in 1916 when Wilson was running for reelection, saying he had kept us out of war. Roosevelt was saying the same thing but this time circus business was pretty good for most shows.

While in Montana the Bud Anderson show began getting its best take so far in the season. A total of 30 stands were played in the state, off and on from mid June to late July.

The July 13 *Billboard* told of the Montana run with headlines: "Lewistown big for Bud Anderson Show." Dated Lewistown, Montana, July 6, the story read: "The Bud Anderson Jungle Oddities and 3 Ring Circus scored heavily here June 14 with two near capacity houses. The show had received much pub-

The Anderson office-ticket semi-trailer and side show in 1940. John Thiele photo.

licity through P. M. Silloway, local circus fan. At noon on show day hundreds of children and adults thronged Main Street to see the free act, a baby elephant ride a tricycle along a block of crowded thoroughfare, a unique street attraction.

"The frame-up of this show is a revelation to those who imagine that a motorized circus is limited by its transportation facilities. Show carries seven performing elephants, four camels, a den of lions, hyenas, and monkeys, several handsome manage horses, eight beautiful liberty equines, eight military ponies and other minor stock.

"The after show: Jack Hoxie, movie star, manager; baby elephant, Capt. MacDonald, trainer; fancy rifle shooting, Dixie Starr; lariat act, Clyde Widener; fancy rope spinning and dare devil riding, Clyde and Doris Widener; movie scene, Dixie Starr and pony; Old Scout, Hoxie's famous horse.

"The side show: Leon Bennett, manager and lecturer; Larry Benner, Punch and Judy, ventriloquist, inside lecturer; tickets, Elmer Myers, Dixie Wilson; door, Al

Mr. and Mrs. Norman (Luke) Anderson in front of one of his concessions stands on the midway in 1940. Pfening Archives.



Martin, Kokomo Anders; Madame Cleo, mentalist; Vernell Coriell, juggler; Zaza Coriell, Chinese mystery act; Lester Garner, snakes; Bamboola, fire eater. The jungle animals are seen in the kid show."

The staff listed was the same as in May 25 *Billboard*, except Kokomo Anders was no longer listed as legal adjuster. Possibly Joe B. Webb had taken over those duties. Not previously listed were Mrs. S. C. Brooks, Mrs. William Mitchell, and Mrs. Dime Wilson on reserve seats.

The band included C. S. Brooks, leader; Williard Isley, C. B. Van Vactor, trumpets, Louis Mittendorf, baritone; Chester Espy, Eddie Norak, trombones; Ralph Morak, bass; Jess Morris, drums.

It is interesting that the performance was about the same as on opening day since the show had advertised several times for big show acts.

By far the greatest trade press coverage came during the show's visit to Montana. During the month of July Anderson spent the first 13 days in North Dakota, the rest in Montana. By contrast not a single line of print appeared in the *Billboard* about the North Dakota stands. Silloway seemed to be the *Billboard* correspondent and another lengthy report from him came in the August 17 issue: "Number of Montana stands very good for Anderson."

"The Bud E. Anderson Circus had a very successful engagement in Missoula on July 30.

"Though the prospective grain crop in the Flathead region is somewhat lighter than usual owing to prolonged hot dry weather, Kalispell gave the snow full houses at both performances. At Polson there was a drizzling day, making the attendance about a half house at matinee and three-fourths at night. At St. Ignatius, with drizzle still continuing and chilly weather, attendance was light at both performances. At Stevensville the weather was ideal for the Sunday matinee only and the town had a real circus day, with the populace crowding the streets to see the free elephant act at noon downtown and giving the show a capacity house.

"Hamilton, only 18 miles from Stevensville, was a banner town. The people of the community were on the streets at noon hour to see the elephants and gave the matinee very fine patronage. Capacity at night. With this show the elephants, camels and jungle animals are kept in the side show, which invariably gets a heavy play on this account.

"At Missoula the show had to buck the county fair secretary and commissioners under a rule that no traveling amusement organization could play the city within 20 days of the fair. The daily newspaper refused to carry any stories or pictures about the show; in fact it was still doubt

Out of the Heart of America Comes

General Offices; Emporia, Kansas

DATE	TOWN	MILE
SEASON 1940—NO. 1		
Fri., April 12.....	Emporia, Kansas	-----
Sat., April 13.....	Emporia, Kansas	-----
SUNDAY		
Mon., April 15.....	Herington, Kan.	69
Tues., April 16.....	McPherson, Kan.	63
Wed., April 17.....	Newton, Kan.	31
Thur., April 18.....	Augusta, Kan.	45
Fri., April 19.....	Eureka, Kan.	53
Sat., April 20.....	Yates Center, Kan.	36
Sun., April 21.....	Erie, Kan. (Matinee Only)	50
Mon., April 22.....	Ft. Scott, Kan.	81
Tues., April 23.....	Burlingame, Kan.	135
Wed., April 24.....	Valley Falls, Kan.	58
Thur., April 25.....	Hiawatha, Kan.	50
Fri., April 26.....	Mound City, Mo.	94
Sat., April 27.....	Maryville, Mo.	30
TOTAL MILEAGE.....		795
C. S. BROOKS, MAIL AGENT		

Bud Anderson Circus No. 1 1940 route card. Pfening Archives.

ful the night before the date if the show would be allowed to play the stand. However, there was a radio broadcast in the morning and also one at noon, and for the elephant act downtown where at least 2,000 people congregated. Result was about a three-fourths attendance at the matinee and nearly a full house at night.

"In advance of the show John D. Foss, routing and contracting agent, is acting under the policy of the show avoiding serious competition, playing the better class of towns which do not get a circus every year and by breaking the long jumps with smaller communities and Sunday matinees. The result demonstrates that the people at large are generally circus minded and ready to patronize a real good circus whether railroad or motorized, playing at popular admission prices."

Silloway also wrote an article in the June-July 1940 *White Tops* which included details, especially of the physical equipment as well as the program, not contained in the *Billboard*.

"The appearance of the Anderson show on the lot is a revelation to any who imagine that all motorized circuses are poverty stricken affairs and limited in transportation facilities. The backyard and surroundings exhibit a showy array of high class modern house-cars with large trucks for the show equipment. The big top is an 80 foot round with a 40 foot and two 30 middles. The smaller tents, side show, 80 ft. round with a 40 foot middle; cookhouse and horse tent. The concession

stands are made in broad stripes of blue and white.

"Inside big top are three rings. Practically all seats both front and back are reserved. Prices for big show are 40 cents for adults, children 25 cents, and reserves 75 cents extra. After show tickets are 15 cents for adults and 10 cents for children.

"The program: Opening parade led by Bud E. Anderson mounted on his beautiful white stallion with silver plated saddle, then the big show performers, the 7 elephants, 4 camels, dancing horses, liberty and menage horses, military ponies etc. Eight performing ponies, center ring, handled by Matt Laurish. Trapeze contortion and upside down walking, Arthur Henry; clown act, Charles Dryden, Whitey McCoy, Dime Wilson. Trio of performing elephants handled by Capt. Mac MacDonald. Baseball act, clowns. Web and plange endurance act, Miss Ollie; contortion act, Arthur Henry; juggling, Charles Dryden, head balancing on swinging trapeze, the great Echo. High school dancing horses, Doris Widener and others. Eva, greatest performing elephant, handled by Anderson. Introduction of Jack Hoxie's wild west. Hand and head balancing, Everette and Zaza. Barrel balancing and juggling, Charles Dryden. Rolling globe, the Henry Duo. Risley act, the Yoshidas. Eight liberty horses handled by Matt Laurish. Head slide, the Great Everett. Swinging ladders, Ollie and Zaza. Aristocrats of the tight wire, Arthur and Marie Henry. Perch act, the Yoshidas. Risley and teeterboard act, Coriell family."

The show left Montana for good and moved into Idaho at Mullen, August 1 and from then on to end of the season virtually nothing appeared in the *Billboard* concerning the show's activities. Five dates were played in Idaho then it moved into Washington for New Port, August 7, then back to Idaho for Couer d' Alene and St. Maries. Two more dates were played in Washington, Tekoa and Uniontown, followed by additional Idaho stands through August 22. According to the route sheet two days were played in Lewiston. Moving south into Utah at Tremonton the show played five stands then continued eastward into Colorado for twelve dates, with Craig, August 28, the first, and La Junta, September 7, the last.

The Emporia *Weekly Gazette* of September 5 reported: "Bud Anderson, Emporia circus man, has bought 100 tons of hay for his winter needs and plans to headquarter again at the Anderson circus farm on Highway 50S.

"Anderson's circus makes its Labor day appearance in Leadville, Colorado. The show will be on the road a few more weeks before returning to Emporia, An-



derson reported in a letter to the *Gazette*. The remainder of the route includes Colorado and western Kansas towns, a few points in Oklahoma and in northern Arkansas before heading home.

"A big 24-foot python, weighing over 200 pounds, has been added to the circus property. Anderson reports the big snake, which has not eaten for a long time, devoured three 25-pound goats within a few days."

Moving further east the show played Oklahoma for twelve stands, venturing into Kansas for Kiowa, September 15. Final date in Oklahoma was Westville, September 22, followed by a lengthy tour of Arkansas. During these weeks there was but a single notation in *Billboard*.

The Arkansas tour started at Fayetteville, September 23, and was followed by 31 additional dates. William H. Woodcock wrote in the November 2 *Billboard* that he had a splendid visit at the Bud Anderson Circus at Prescott, Arkansas on October 18 and received a courteous welcome from the management. He said Anderson had the finest herd of elephants and camels he had ever seen with a motorized show. As performers, the elephants were the equal of any.

The final Arkansas stand came at Si-loam Springs, October 29, then the show moved into Missouri at Carthage which was followed by Lamar, Colorado Springs, and Butler. The last day of the season came at Paola, Kansas, on November 3. The show then moved into its quarters in Emporia.

The November 7 *Emporia Weekly Gazette* reported: "Bud E. Anderson, Emporia circus man, will close the 1940 season of his show Sunday and will return to his headquarters 1 1/2 miles east of Emporia."

"In the season route card Mr. Anderson reports: 'The season of 1940, while being far from big for the show, was satisfactory as a whole--the Western states making up for poor business in Middle and Southern states. Two days were missed, Newton, Kansas and Leadville, Colorado and a matinee at Burlingame, Kansas.

The Anderson stake driver and two semi-trailers in 1940. John Thiele photo.

"During the season, Anderson's show traveled 11,526 miles. The circus exhibited on 22 Sundays. The longest jump between towns played was 180 miles, between Muhl, Idaho and Trenonyton, Utah. The shortest was seven miles, between Mullan and Wallace, Idaho."

The route sheet listed the program at the close of the season. The Henry Duo and the Echo Yoshada troupe, Carvello wire act and Escalando riding act had left the show during the season. The Mara Monta Duo, perch act, Tex Orton's wire act and Dime Wilson's table rock were added during the tour.

The *Emporia Weekly Gazette* of November 28 provided the final information on Anderson in 1940: "Three elephants of the Anderson circus will be trucked this week to South Bend, Indiana, to join a show featuring midget actors. The contract for the elephants and three caretakers guarantees a six week season and may run until spring.

"Two camels and ten ponies have been leased to Sandbury Attractions at Fort Dodge, Iowa, for use in Christmas programs in many midwest towns.

"A 24-foot python, which was one of the profitable side show attractions of the circus last season, has died since the circus returned to its winter quarters. Death resulted from infection after the big snake jerked out some of its own teeth in striking at wire covering its pit. The skin of the dead snake measured 26 inches at the largest part of the body."

The 1940 circus season ended on a positive note. *Billboard* observed that the circus had made a comeback after two poor seasons and the future looked bright. British air power had so far prevented any invasion of the home islands and its army's successes against the Italians in North Africa during the coming winter put the U. S. populace in a much better mood than they were six months earlier. Bud Anderson's show was now bedded down in its

barns in Emporia, Kansas to get ready for the next season.

Epilog

Anderson and Mac MacDonald came to a parting of the ways after the 1940 season. A report in the *Topeka Capital* read: "Fred E. Anderson of Emporia, proprietor of the Bud E. Anderson Jungle Oddities and Circus, has been made defendant in a \$15,000 damage suit filed yesterday in federal court here by M. C. MacDonald of York, South Carolina, elephant trainer with the circus last year.

"MacDonald stated in his petition that, in addition to his duties of 'actively, vigorously and strenuously directing' the elephants, he rode a spirited, three year old stallion in a horse act.

"The night of June 14, while awaiting his cue to ride the horse into the ring at Bowman, North Dakota, some ponies broke out of the 'pad room' and MacDonald attempted to round them up with his stallion, the petition alleges. His steed became fractious, raked MacDonald's leg along a barbed wire fence for about twenty feet, inflicting severe cuts that have proven permanent injuries, preventing his former agility in handling the animal acts, MacDonald asserts."

The out come of the suit is unknown, but it was probably settled quickly with a moderate amount of money. MacDonald continued to work elephants for the rest of his life.

Special thanks to Orin C. King who researched the 1940 Emporia, Kansas newspapers for Anderson references used in the article. John Thiele provided a number of photographs. Luke Anderson provided information and illustrations.

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In 1962, when he was 61 years old, Felix Morales decided that six years of retirement was enough and went out with Pete Cristiani's Cristiani-Wallace Bros. show as prop boss. He had after all supplied many of the hooks, swivels and other rigging from his own extensive supply. While there he was told one day by a first of May youngster that he was "an old, has been." His immediate reply was, "It's better to be a 'has been' than a 'never was.'"

His reply was an apt one for Felix Modesto Morales had indeed been a performer to be reckoned with in earlier days. Born in Chicago in 1901 to Martine and Conception Morales, he came from a background of five generations of performers.¹ He and his sisters Pieta (sometimes listed as Piedad), Concha (Conchita), Lola and Teresa, were one of the most sought after family groups during the twenties and thirties. Among the acts presented by this group of versatile performers were: tight wire, foot slide, perch, teeth slide, iron jaw, hair slide, heel catch single trapeze, trampoline, head slide, casting, and a host of more routine acts. Their names graced the programs of such shows as Gollmar Bros.,

Father Martine Morales. Pfening Archives.



FELIX MORALES

Maybe a Has Been, But Never a Never Was

By Frank M. Thompson

Sun Bros., Hagenbeck-Wallace, John Robinson, Walter L. Main, Downie Bros., Seils-Sterling, Ringling-Barnum, Kay Bros., King Bros., Biller Bros., Rogers Bros. and Polack Bros., to name only a few.

A Mexican did not have an easy life in this country in the early days of this century, and a performer's life was little better. In spite of this, Felix, his parents and sisters managed to be among the early Latin performers who broke ground for those who followed. Their parents had come to this country in hopes of finding better business for their trampoline-casting act. Martine had been a well known performer in Mexico. He met and married Conception shortly after she arrived in Mexico as a member of an act which had sailed from Spain during the late 1890s. Felix, their first child, was born when his mother was only 15 years old. The sisters followed with some regularity, their mother working as catcher in the family act during her pregnancies. Winters were spent in a Chicago apartment.

Felix's early years were spent on Campbell Bros. Circus, a show which played the upper midwest. Like other show children he received no pay and had to find a way, and time, to earn spending money. A gift of a Kodak box camera showed that he had a surprising interest and talent in photography. It was this that he chose as his way to earn spending money. He soon

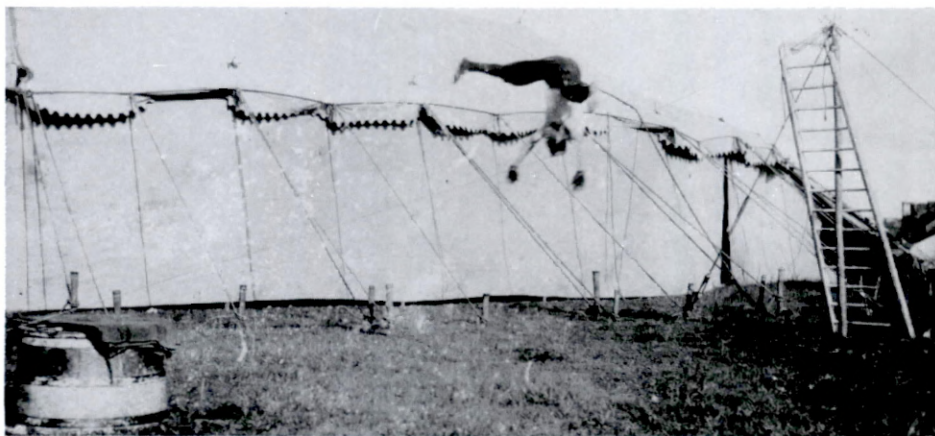
learned that egos being what they were, pictures of performers and department heads were more in demand than general show photos. As a result, he took hundreds of pictures of circus people, selling them at two for twenty five cents. These were processed by the youngster in one of the few "dark rooms" available to him—a doniker, where he stood straddling the hole while he mixed chemicals and developed his photos!²

By the time he was ten, Felix was an enthusiastic performer.

One winter day, he and his father watched a man do a short headslide in a Chicago vaudeville theater. His father suggested that Felix could do this act if he wanted to. Without hesitation Felix gave his answer and they returned to their high-roomed old apartment where Martine started building a rigging for the act he himself had seen only from the audience that one time. A practice rigging was soon completed and Felix found that his father had also planned a rigorous schedule to be followed in preparing the boy to do the "slide." Of critical importance to Felix practice was learning to always fall face down on the wire as he slid downward. Should he lose his balance and fall on his back on the wire, it would be nearly impossible to prevent a bad fall; face down, he could grab the wire with his leather gloved hands and possibly hook a leg over the wire. Such spills always resulted in ugly bruises to his legs, but the training schedule set up by Martine was such that, although it was a full three years before he did the act in public, Felix never fell onto his back during the 47 years he did the act.

When the family moved to Gollmar Bros. Circus for the 1914 season, Felix was

Felix, about age ten, practicing the headslide in the back yard of Gollmar Bros. around 1912. A bull tub was used to land on. Conchita Thompson collection.





Felix, Concha and Piedad on Gollmar Bros. Circus in 1914. Pfening Archives.

completing the slide more and more often. and the wire had been lengthened to a full 100 feet. In a well known photo of the Gollmar show train stranded in Bohnstiel, North Dakota when the tracks were washed out by a flood in 1915, there is a tall grain elevator beside the tracks. In later life Felix recalled that when it became obvious that the train would be delayed for some days, his father immediately rigged the slide from the grain elevator across the train tracks to the ground so that he could do the required number of slide attempts each day while they waited.³

On another occasion, he decided that he had done enough slides for the day while he was already at the top of the 30 foot pole. His father disappeared for a few minutes and Felix thought that he had won the battle of willpower. Unfortunately, Martine soon appeared with a long whip borrowed from an Australian act. One pop of the whip near his legs was enough to make Felix reconsider the

Felix, Fuanita, Concha and Lola Morales in the 1920s. Pfening Archives.



situation at top speed and he made a perfect slide.⁴

All the time he was practicing the head-slide Felix was of course performing. He was a proficient tumbler, wire walker and trampoline and casting act performer. Like most boys of those years he also took part in the leaps, running down an inclined ramp and doing somersaults over the elephants.

He was an especially fine trampoline performer, showing a ballet dancer's form as he worked, landing in the same spot on the rope net each time. He had learned on a rope net made by his father and preferred it throughout his life. He later made all of his own nets, finally settling on one 6 by 12 foot supported by rubber shock cords. This net was, according to him, "faster" than the canvas beds normally used.

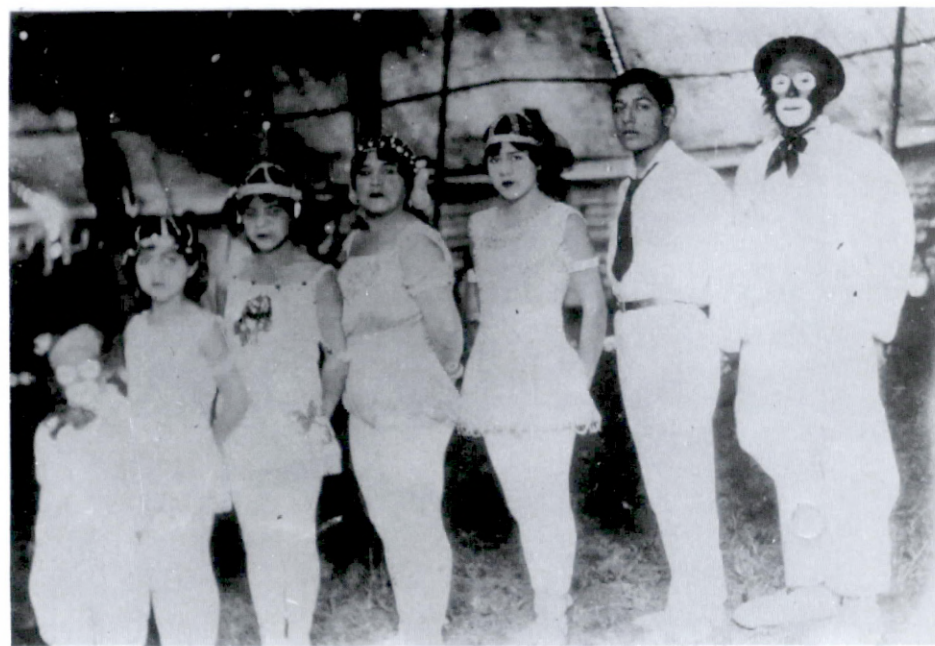
A term not often used by the general public is "swing time" trampoline performing. In this, the performer goes into his next trick each time he bounces; in other words there are no "idle" bounces

The Gollmar train stalled in Bohnstiel, North Dakota with grain storage building in back. Pfening Archives.

between tricks as the performer finishes one trick and immediately goes into the next. Felix was a master of this and for years did an advertised minimum of fifty consecutive somersaults per show. His all time record was an astounding 204, done during a performance when he was "feeling good."⁵ So far as is known, this record still stands.

He was also an extremely competent tight wire performer. On one occasion he casually mentioned doing a feet to feet back somersault on the tight wire, while holding a parasol. A listener who was a sometimes wire performer immediately called this an outright lie, stating flatly that it would have been impossible since

Theresa, Lola, Concha, Mother Conception, Piedad, Felix, Father Martine on the John Robinson Circus in 1922. Pfening Archives.





Felix doing the headslide under canvas. Conchita Thompson collection.

the parasol would interfere and prevent completion of the trick. Felix simply said, "wait here," and disappeared into his truck. Moments later he returned with a photo of himself, in the middle of what was clearly back somersault on the wire, parasol in hand.⁶

It was the headslide that became his signature act, however. It sounds relatively simple: walk up an inclined 100 foot wire to the top of a 30 foot pole; balance on your head on the wire while wearing a leather hat with a block of wood with a shallow groove in it; and slide down the wire, grabbing it with gloved hands and do a half turn, landing in a standing position on a padded table. Other performers have done it over the years, including at least one who was killed, but none have done it with the flair and artistry of Felix Morales.⁷

As he matured, Felix had an increasing number of offers from agents who wanted to book the headslide. Finally he left the family troupe in 1924, and went out

The Felix Morales family on Buck Owens Circus in 1945. Pfening Archives.



on his own. Together with the late Barney "Soldier" Langsdorf as his prop boss and assistant, he toured all of the major vaudeville circuits. In these situations the slide was rigged so that Felix walked up the wire from the stage to the top of the pole which was situated in or near the balcony. From there, he slid downward over the audience to the stage. This, as can be imagined, was a spectacular act that made him a headliner on most bills.

Following the deaths of his father, and sister Pieta about a year

apart, Felix returned to the family troupe in 1928. Although they no longer worked together in the trampoline-casting act, the family as a whole presented a number of acts that made them in demand. Concha was by then married to Billy Pape. Together they did an outstanding balancing perch act. Teresa had developed her spectacular heel and toe catch trapeze act. Together with sister Lola and Felix's new wife, Iva, they did an iron jaw act. The family, augmented by non-members, some of whom, including Pedro Morales, using the Morales name, also presented a big double tight wire act and utilized Felix's slide rigging to do foot slide, teeth slide and hair slide in addition to the headslide. The family was a major attraction with Downie Brothers Circus during the late twenties and early thirties.

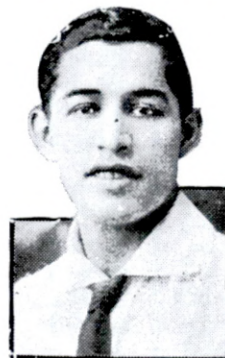
Pedro was "adopted" by the family as a youngster. His origins are unknown, although it is suspected that he may have been an illegal immigrant. At any rate, he received as "pay" only his food and clothing and became a favorite of the family's matriarch, Conception. In later years Felix and Pedro would joke about Pedro's ability to wheedle a flashy wardrobe while Felix was forced to buy his own.

Eventually, the family troupe gradually broke apart as various members married and went their own ways: Concha and Billy Pape to the Ringling show; Lola and her husband, trombone player Tony Lamb, to run their own under canvas movie and variety show. Felix and Iva had also ventured away during 1929 with their own show, including many family members, playing the Mexican border towns during the winter. Teresa stayed with Downie until 1936, then went to Seils-Sterling.

In 1932 Felix formed an association that was to last for many years when he signed to appear with Irving Polack and Louis Stern's new Polack Brothers Circus. As he said in the 1950s, "I was there for nine years and saw it grow . . . to its present beauty." During this period the acts presented on the Polack show by Felix and his wife Iva were trampoline, tight wire, loop the loop and the headslide.

World War II had its effect on the family acts as it did on nearly everyone. The dual problems of gas rationing and a severe tire shortage finally caused Felix to use his cable splicing abilities in a job at an airbase in Tennessee in 1942 and 1943. A return to Polack in 1944 was followed by Austin Bros. in 1945 and the Buck Owens show and C. R. Montgomery show in 1946.

FELIX MORALES Presents the INTERNATIONALLY FAMOUS MORALES FAMILY



THE
Greatest and Most Versatile
Combination Ever Presented

Cover of four page booklet used to advertise the Morales acts in the early 1930s. Pfening Archives.

Promoter Col. E. N. Williams put together a string of dates in 1947, 1948 and early 1949 which Felix and his family played, alternating with Polack's dates. Shortly after its debut in Mobile in 1949, Felix joined Biller Bros. Circus as equestrian director and completed the season with that show. Teresa's heel catch trapeze act was also on the Biller show. This was followed by the ill-fated Ward Bros. indoor circus which folded in 1950. In 1951 Felix was again with an outdoor show, Rogers Bros. Circus, owned by Si Rubens where he was equestrian director,

and presented his headslide which was in contrast to his stint with Biller Bros., where he had not performed.

The formation of the Felix Morales Tent #85, Circus Fans of America, during the mid 1950s was a matter of intense pride to Mr. Morales. This tent has remained active throughout the years.

Several years of spot dates followed, with more and more time being spent at the new family home in Florida. Felix worked for a tent and awning firm in Tampa where he felt at home sewing and repairing tents. This came to an end when he went out with the Cristiani-Wallace show as rigger/prop man in 1962. Final, complete retirement came in 1964. Felix Morales died July 29, 1975 at his home from a massive stroke.

Felix was elected to Peru's Circus Hall of Fame in 1992. This honor would have pleased him greatly, since he was not only a performer on what he always called the "Corporation Shows," but was a strong supporter of these shows. He also was a lifelong circus fan.

Two of the original Morales family still survive, Felix's sisters Lola and Teresa. Lola lives in New Orleans with her daughter and Teresa lives in Tampa near her children. Both are in their 80s.

FELIX MODESTO MORALES February 24, 1901-July 29, 1975

The following chronological record was dictated by Mr. Morales to his wife Iva, most likely between 1952 to 1957. It was passed on to their daughter, Conchita Morales Thompson. It is reproduced here as written. Comments, additions and possible corrections are in parentheses.

1907-1909 Campbell Bros. Circus; Fairbury, Nebraska.

1910-1913 Sun Bros. Circus; Nine car show from Macon, Georgia.

1914-1915 Gollmar Bros. Circus; Baraboo, Wisconsin. (Note: A photo in Robert Gollmar's *My Father Owned A Circus* shows Felix on the Gollmar show in "1908" as a boy obviously older than seven. This may be a case of the book's photo being misdated.)

1916 La Tena Show; owned by Andrew Downie; Havre de Grace, Maryland.

1917-1918 B. Ward Beam, agent, sent family to Cuba. Came back in fall for fairs.

1919-1920 Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus, Peru, Indiana.

1921 Back to Andrew Downie, Walter



Morales trampoline act on Polack Bros. Circus. Conchita Thompson collection.

L. Main title, Havre de Grace, Maryland.

1922 Gollmar Bros., Montgomery, Alabama, operated by American Circus Corporation.

1923 John Robinson, Montgomery, Alabama, operated by American Circus Corporation.

1924 Keith-Albee Theatre Circus unit. (Vaudeville)

1925 Pantages (Theater) Circus unit. (Vaudeville)

1926-1927 Wirth and Hamid fairs.

1928-1932 Downie Bros. Circus for 4 years. Sold to Charles Sparks during this time. (*Bandwagon* program listings and group photos for Downie Bros. during the years 1928 through 1932 indicate that Felix Morales appeared with that show in 1928 and again in 1930 & 1931. In 1929 Morales had his own show which played the Texas border area. Although others in his family appeared on Downie in 1932, Felix apparently did not, since he was at the Million Dollar Pier in Atlantic City, New Jersey with the late May Wirth in July 1932.)

1933-1942 Fairs for Frank Wirth. Joined Polack in October 1932.

1942-1943 Worked for Uncle Sam as rigger in airplane station, Dryersburg, Tennessee.

1944 Polack Bros.

1945 Austin Bros., Austin, Texas.

1946 Buck Owens and C. R. Montgomery circuses.

1947-1949 Williams show and Polack dates. Although not listed here by him, Mr. Morales was equestrian director of the Biller Bros. Circus for all but the first several weeks of that show's 1949 season.

1950 George Pugh's Ward Bros. indoor show

1951 Rogers Bros. Circus, Fort Myers, Florida.

It should be kept in mind that in any given season, many additional engagements were worked for various fairs, indoor circuses, etc., particularly during the winter months. For example, Felix Morales, together with son Felix Jr. and daughter Conchita, joined the James M. Cole Circus at Morristown New Jersey in August of 1945, completing that show's season. Similarly, he was with King Bros. Circus for at least a portion of the 1945 season.

My thanks to Joe Bradbury for help in preparing this manuscript.

FOOTNOTES

1. Elephant trainer Tom Thompson, Felix's grandson, is now the 8th generation of performers in this family.

2. Conversation between Felix Morales and the author, 1972.

3. Conversation between Felix Morales and the author, 1972.

4. Conversation between Felix Morales and the author, 1972.

5. Joseph T. Bradbury, Downie Bros. Wild Animal Circus, Part II. *Bandwagon*, January-February 1976. "A visitor at Ware, Massachusetts said that . . . Felix Morales astonished all by doing 150 somersaults from a trampoline."

6. Witnessed by the author on Biller Bros. Circus, 1949.

7. George Chindahl, *A History of the Circus in America*, Caxton Printers Ltd, Caldwell, Idaho. "Julio Olvero died June 2, 1932 as the result of injuries sustained in a fall while sliding on his head down a wire during a performance in Philadelphia" (on the Ringling show).

Felix in costume for the headslide in the 1940s. Conchita Thompson collection.



The first word on the season of 1894 for Walt McCafferty appeared in the Sabetha *Republican-Herald* on March 16.

"Walt McCafferty has moved in town and is beginning to fit up his show for the coming season. We understand he expects to put a 50¢ show on the road this year. He is a good showman and deserves to succeed. We hope the coming summer will be a better one for his business than last."

McCafferty's only advertisement in the *Republican-Herald* was published on April 27, the same day the advance crew took the road.

"COMING!"

In All Its Grandeur And Just As Advertised!

**WALT McCAFFERTY'S
GREAT GOLDEN SHOWS**

Huge World's Museum Oriental Caravan
Circus and Menagerie
will exhibit at SABETHA SATURDAY
MAY 5TH.

The most Novel Diversified Interesting
and Instructive Tented Exhibition
in the World.

Stupendous and Bewildering Features
Exceptionally Meritorious Representing
all Nations.

Outdoing all Previous Shows.

Notwithstanding our former greatness
we have this year.

Enlarged Our Already Great Shows.

To more than three times their former
vastness. Extravagantly lauded by the
Clergy the Press and the Public as the cul-
minating triumph of the age. Knowing
the wants of the amusement
loving public.

We have placed before them an exhibition
combining under one management.

More Novelties More Strange and Death-
Defying Acts. More New Features
More and Better Artists.

Than any Show in America.

Ask any Traveling Man Station Agent or
Newspaper Man and they will tell you
that the Great Golden Show is the
Greatest Show on the road.

20 YEARS AHEAD OF THE TIMES!

"We actually exhibit and perform more
than others presume to even promise. No
swindling schemes, devices, fraudulent
practices will be tolerated or coun-
tenanced under any circumstances. THE
GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH! More 1,
2, 3, and 4 Horse Riders, Contortionists,
Acrobats, Gymnasts, Horizontal Bar Per-
formers, Aerial Artists, Clowns, Leapers,
Tumblers Cannon Ball Acts, Double and
Balance Trapeze Acts, Caledonian Sports,
Brother Acts, Bicycle and Pyramid Acts,
Roman lader (sic), La Perche, 2 Horse Me-

ONLY BIG SHOW COMING Exalted in Aim and Pure in Tone

Vol. IV, Chapter Three, Part One, 1894

By Orin Copple King

Copyright © 1993 Orin Copple King

nage Echcelle Acts, Etc. than ever seen be-
fore in one tented exhibition. MAKE
READY FOR THE GRAND STREET PA-
RADE AT 12:30 Noon Every Day Rain or
Shine.

"Come to town early from the country
and be on our line of march to see the
only Egyptian Caravan parade your prin-
cipal streets. A vast retinue of noble

McCafferty newspaper ad in the May 4,
1894 *Hanover Democrat*. Kansas State
Historical Society.

COMING!

In All Its Grandeur and
Just as Advertised!

Walt McCafferty's Great Golden Shows

Huge Worlds Museum, Oriental Egp-
tian Caravan, Circus and Menagerie
Will Exhibit at



Hanover, Wednesday, May 16

knights, beautiful ladies ar-
rayed in Oriental costumes,
superb steeds burdened with
costly trappings, reflecting
scenes more grand than king
or conqueror ever looked
upon, exhausting the most
vivid imagination in concep-
tion and a sight once seen
never to be forgotten.

"Two Performances Daily
at 1 And 7 P. M. One 25 Cent
Ticket Admits to all Ad-
vertised Shows."

Although McCafferty ad-
vertised "More Strange and
Death-Defying Acts," the ad named no
performers.

A handout published April 27 claimed
"Mr. McCafferty, who has been wintering
with us, will open his Great Golden
Shows' season here May 5th. He has en-
larged his show to three times larger than
last season, he has made a special engage-
ment with the MILES ORTON FAMILY
of riders, also has added a menagerie,
new wardrobe, trappings, new people
and in fact a new Big Show. Mr. McCaf-
ferty, although this show is so much larg-
er, will charge but 25 cents."

Another handout mentioned that
among the performers were "Theo. Bar-
reta the gymnast and clown. Basnado, the
champion head balancing trapeze artist,
and a host of leapers tumblers and ac-
robats too numerous to mention."

The show, according to the *Republican-
Herald*, opened on May 5 as planned and
was "greeted by an odience (sic) that
taxed the seating capacity of his big tent
to the utmost. We can recommend Mr.
McCafferty as a man honorable in his
dealings who conducts his show upon the
same lines of business integrity expected
in the ordinary line of business."

The band was strengthened by two Sa-
betha musicians, John Shaffer and John
Bumgarther, who played in the parade
and during both performances. Shaffer ac-
companied the band to Bern, the first
road date, to help the group get or-
ganized and returned to Sabetha the fol-
lowing day.

"Ralph Shiffer was seized with the cir-
cus fever during McCafferty's stay here
and he finally persuaded his parents to al-
low him to go with the show. He assists
in the cooking tent and makes himself
generally useful. His wages are not large
of course—but what are wages to a boy
who can be around the big tent day and
night? A circus is a boy's heaven, there is
no getting around it."

Three of Sabetha's citizens, A. M. Ei-
siminger, Ted Kerr and Fred Corwin, who
did not get enough of the Great Golden
Shows on opening day, traveled to Bern
to catch it again.

The *Bern Press* commenting on the exhibitions of May 7 said, "McCafferty's show did not meet the expectations of the spectators. The show was not as good as last year and the performers were not perfect in their parts. It is hoped that they will do better or certainly they will have to play quit."

The *Axtell Anchor* carried McCafferty's ad on April 27 for the exhibitions on May 8. The issue of May 4 carried three small mentions of McCafferty and a rather lengthy handout from Ringling announcing their appearance in Seneca on May 16, only 12 miles from Axtell. The *Anchor* had no further reports on either show.

The Great Golden Shows exhibited in Frankfort on May 9. The *Weekly Review* reported that "The fine rain Wednesday was the heaviest of the season. It fairly poured nearly the whole night and every gutter was a rivulet," and "It was a better night for ducks than for a circus."

In spite of the rain the *Review* claimed "There was quite a crowd in to see McCafferty's 'great aggregation' Wednesday. Those who attended are divided in their opinion as to the merits of the show, some claiming it worth going to see while others seemed to think it a very slim affair--but the probability is there are more of the latter class than the former."

The *Oketo Herald* on May 4 reported that "Ad Funk, advance agent for McCafferty's Great Golden shows, was in town yesterday and fixed May 14 as the day for the show to appear in Oketo."

Funk placed no advertisement in the *Herald* other than several short paragraphs in the news columns.

"Are you going to witness the event of the season in Oketo on May 14?"

"Walt McCafferty's circus has engaged the famous Orton family of riders, also Minnette, the strongest woman on earth. Will exhibit in Oketo on May 14."

"Walt McCafferty's Great Golden Shows which exhibit here Monday, May 14 is a feature three times its former size. More horses men and wagons than any 25 cent show on earth. A grand street parade of glittering gold and splendor at noon."

Following show day the *Herald* commented that "Mac's show was almost (?) as good as Barnum's."

"The circus drew quite a large crowd to Oketo on Monday last and our Merchants report a good trade."

May was a busy month for the circus fans of Marysville with McCafferty on the 15th, Ringling at Seneca (32 miles) on the 16th, and on the 26th F. J. Taylor's Circus and Menagerie. There are no reports on McCafferty's day in Marysville.

The Great American Circus played Hanover on May 10, featuring a balloon

ascension and the parachute jump by Prof. T. E. Kinkade. McCafferty exhibited six days later on May 16. On the 18th the *Hanover Democrat* reported that "The shows have come and gone and the boys are minus a quarter."

The *Cuba Daylight* noted that "Quite a crowd was in to the show Saturday afternoon [May 19] and got fooled as usual." The *Daylight* also mentioned "Another show in town this week," but provided no clue to its identity.

The *Scandia Journal* was duty-bound to warn its readers of the folly of gambling

COMING?

In All Its Grandeur and Just As Advertised!

WALT. McCAFFERTY'S

Great Golden Shows

Huge World's Museum, Oriental Egyptian Caravan, Circus and Menagerie

Will Exhibit at Scandia, Kans., Monday, May 21, 1894.



Notwithstanding our former greatness we have, this year,

Enlarged our already Great Shows

To more than three times their former vastness. Extravagantly lauded by the clergy, the press and the public as the culminating triumph of the age. Knowing the wants of the amusement loving public, we have placed before them an exhibition combining under one management

More and Better Artists than any Show in America.

Ask any traveling man, station agent or newspaper man and they will tell you that the Great Golden Show is the Greatest Show on the road. We actually exhibit and perform more than others presume to even promise. No swindling schemes, devices, fraudulent practices will be tolerated or countenanced under any circumstances.

THE GREATEST CIRCUS ON EARTH.

McCafferty advertisement in the May 4, 1894 *Scandia Journal*. Kansas State Historical Society.

with a circus sharp. There are no reports of any game of chance on the McCafferty show, but the *Journal* thought it necessary to alert the public of the possible hazards of show day on May 21.

The following appeared in the *Journal* on May 11: "Last year when Cook & Whitby's circus was here a great many men, especially those who were complaining of the scarcity of money, lost from \$2 to \$150 bucking the various 'tigers' connected with the show. They had been duly warned by the JOURNAL that no man ought to try to beat another man's game. Now there are two shows billed to appear in Scandia this month. We desire to say that as far as possible no gambling devices will be allowed to be operated at these shows; but we desire to say this and to impress it on the people's minds that no gambling device can do business in a town unless there are suckers to bite. You can't get something for nothing out of a shell game any easier than you can out of

anything else. If you monkey with the buzz saw you had better take a basket along to go home in; if you buck the tiger at a circus don't expect to take any money home with you. There is only one safe way to do--let the games strictly alone. If you are foolish enough to think you are sharper than a circus gambler don't complain if he scoops you."

After circus day the *Journal* had no reports of the quality of the performance or the attendance but it did complain of a band of rowdies.

"Several of Courtland's all round tough citizens were in and about Scandia on circus day and evening. Among these was Chris Robinson, jointest and keeper of house of prostitution, who was across the river with a supply of liquor, another was Kelly, the jointest, gambler and general tough. He did a bootlegging business until far into the night; it is almost certain that he got his supply of liquor from M. Curren's place. He had a rather close call for the lockup and should he come back it will keep him thinking to keep on the outside of the bars. Scandia and Courtland have a few of the most disreputable, worthless people who ever cursed the earth with their existence."

No one ever died of thirst in prohibition Kansas.

McCafferty placed no advertising in the *Jewell County Republican* concerning the exhibitions at Jewell City on May 23, but the show did erect and cover a 96 foot billboard on the public square.

"Miles Orton," the *Republican* reported, "is the man who owned the big railroad show that got into a fight at Burr Oak eight or ten years ago which resulted in killing a blacksmith and mortally wounding Col. A. W. Mann. Orton has had hard luck since then and is now ring master and bareback rider in McCafferty's little circus which showed in Jewell this week. McCafferty used to be a tumbler in Orton's show. The fortunes of a showman are thus precarious. They are on the crest of the wave one day and in the trough of the sea the next."

The fight referred to above occurred September 19, 1884 when Orton's show played Burr Oak.

The *Jewell City News*, which also carried no advertisement, stated that "We hear that the show on Wednesday was a 'fizzle,'" but the Methodist social circle made about \$20 selling ice cream and cold drinks.

McCafferty played Lebanon on May 24. The *Journal* remarked that "McCafferty's circus has come and gone and those that witness it say there was very little to go."

The *Downs Times* speaking of the exhibitions of May 25, stated that "Walt McCafferty's circus exhibited in Downs last Friday to a good audience both after-

noon and evening. McCafferty gives a good Show for a quarter and is a gentleman." Charles Dudien of Downs joined McCafferty's band.

"Walt McCafferty's Circus," according to the *Osborne County Farmer*, "gave two performances in Osborne last Saturday [May 26] afternoon and evening. Their audiences were rather small; times are too hard for Kansas people to blow their loose change in on a circus. McCafferty gives a pretty good show, some of the feats being particularly brilliant and daring. During the afternoon performance Miles Orton, a famous bare-back rider, was thrown from his horse and slightly injured. Dr. Dillon was called to render medical aid to the unfortunate rider."

The Alton *Western Enterprise* had more to say about circus day on May 28 in that village than was usually reported concerning McCafferty.

There were no fakirs on the McCafferty show, but one independent entrepreneur appeared on the main street of Alton on circus day with an unusual pitch.

"A fakir was in town Monday telling fortunes, feeling heads, and informing people what vocation they were fitted for at twenty-five cents per inform. He had evidently felt the bumps on his own head and concluded that the best thing for him to do was to avoid all semblance of work save that of working the people. The talk put up by all flapdoodle; anyone can tell fortunes. If you wish to know your fortune here it is: If you attend strictly to your own business and hustle you'll get there; if you don't, you won't, and that ends the matter."

In another column the *Enterprise* reported: "Walt McCafferty's Great Golden Circus has come and gone and the 'per capita' in this immediate vicinity has been diminished to some extent thereby. To their credit be it said that there was an absence of the usual gang of bums which follow a circus to prey on the public. Some kicked on the performance; but anyone who would kick on paying a quarter to see the show they put up would kick if it would rain. There was one thing which pained us somewhat: There were one or two things advertised which were not shown. Circus folks oughtn't to lie so. The crowd in attendance was about half as

large as it would have been had there been a wheat crop in sight."

Thousands of people have had a desire to run off with a circus but did not. The *Enterprise* told the story of one who did.

"Elliott Simpson is now an attache of Walt. McCafferty's Great Golden Shows. He will pilot a wagon from town to town and participate in the triumphal march of the Grand and Gorgeously Glittering Egyptian Caravan which shines with such dazzling refulgence that the mid-day sun is impelled to sneak off in a back alley and hide its rays—or something like that. LATER—He came back yesterday having gone as far as Stockton where half a dozen or so quit work because the ghost didn't walk with the required regularity."

Circus day, May 30, was a disappointment to the Kirwin *Independent*.

"The McCafferty circus was here and is gone. Judging by what they had last year as compared to this year, next year they will have a few per cent less than nothing. The show was a slim affair to say the least."

The Phillipsburg *Dispatch* reported: "The McCafferty circus was here last Friday [June 11]. They had a very good house in the afternoon but at night they were compelled to play against the free show and high school graduating exercises and we are told that their attendance was hardly as large as they might have taken care of. There is nothing to the show but the circus performance, but the greater part of that was fairly good. The three Orton boys were very good in all of their parts. The old veteran showman Miles Orton, who has traveled with circuses in this country for fifty years and who at five different times has owned the largest shows traveling, is with this little circus and filling the place of ring master. He also rides but he fell from his horse at Osborne a week before and was not able to do any riding while here. Miles Orton in his palmy days was considered the champion bare back rider of the world and although sixty years of age still rides. The three boys who did such nice work are all his children and seem to be following closely the habits and life of their father. There are no gamblers or confidence men traveling with this show and while here conducted themselves in a very becoming manner."

Referring to the unidentified free show the circus and the graduation exercises at the Presbyterian church the *Dispatch* said, "There were room for all our people and we are informed that all of the different entertainments were well patronized, but be it said to the credit of the intelligence of the people of this city standing room at the church was at a premium."

A strong wind at Almena Monday eve-

ning, June 4, in the words of the *Plaindealer*, "played havoc with the circus tent, also with the tent over the Merry-Go-Round. Those who were away from home when the wind came up experienced no easy time in getting back."

"Walt McCafferty's show Monday attracted quite a large crowd to our city. The Show, which consisted altogether of ring performances, was considered by all to be well worth the price of admission. The managers and performers were a gentlemanly set of fellows."

Two fights at Almena show day "replenished the city treasury to the extent of a few dollars."

The high winds at Almena caused the show to arrive late at Norcature for the exhibitions of June 5. Some parts of the show did not arrive until after four o'clock." Consequently only one performance was given," according to the Norcature *Register*, "but it was the best 25 cent show ever given here. The wire walker and other performers were stars in their profession. The people who stayed to witness this show went away satisfied."

McCafferty ran no newspaper advertisement in the Atwood *Republican Citizen* touting the performances of June 8. Two short announcements appeared in the news columns.

"McCafferty's circus, which exhibits here June 8, requires over one hundred men and horses to transport it. A grand free street parade at noon daily."

"McCafferty's Golden Show will exhibit at Atwood June 8. You will see more silk and plush uniforms, costly tapestry gold and silver, men and women, horses and ponies in the street parade than you will ever see again."

Following the exhibitions the *Citizen* published a brief acknowledgement of Miles Orton and ignored the events of the day.

After Atwood the Kansas route vanishes. Atwood is in the extreme northwestern part of Kansas, 13 miles south of Nebraska and 53 miles east of Colorado.

The last word on Walt McCafferty appeared in the Sabetha *Republican-Herald* on July 27.

"It is learned that McCafferty's circus was stranded at Kearney, Nebraska. Creditors seized the outfit and the performers all left. Creditors here who hold first mortgage on the stuff have taken necessary steps to protect their interests. Last year was hard on shows and McCafferty started out this year burdened with debt with the result that he is stranded. He will be on top again in a few years."

Following is the known 1894 Kansas route of Walt McCafferty's Great Golden Shows Huge World's Museum Oriental Caravan Circus and Menagerie: May 5,



Sabetha Opener; May 7, Bern; May 8, Ax-tell; May 9, Frankfort; May 10, Beattie; May 11, Summerfield; May 12, Liberty, Nebraska; May 14, Oketo; May 15, Marysville; May 16, Hanover; May 19, Cuba; May 21, Scandia; May 23, Jewell City; May 24, Lebanon; May 25, Downs; May 26, Osborne; May 28, Alton; May 29, Stockton; May 30, Kirwin; May 31, Kensington; June 1, Phillipsburg; June 2, Logan; June 4, Almena; June 5, Norcature Evening only; June 6, Oberlin; June 8, Atwood; July ?, Kearney, Nebraska, Strand-ed.

F. J. Taylor's America's Greatest Shows Circus Museum and Menagerie claimed in 1894 to be "Ten Times larger than Ever" and offered a purse of \$10,000 to anyone who could prove that the show did not "give the best CIRCUS performance in America." It must have been true for no one accepted the challenge.

The White Cloud *Globe* on May 11 carried an ad announcing exhibitions there on May 17: "40 STAR PERFORMERS 5 FUNNY FAMOUS CLOWNS

"A show to think and talk about. The greatest number of favorites ever assembled under canvas. A great holiday of rest and recreation for everyone. We guarantee to all a most enjoyable moral refined and artistic entertainment.

"JIP and SAMSON! The mightiest and biggest brutes that breathe—the Goliaths of the giant tribe. The largest elephant and camel in the world. Jip, the grand old battle-scarred war elephant. Samson, the tallest sky-towering camel the world ever saw. Only fan-eared elephant in captivity. The only camel ever born in Iowa. A menagerie containing all the animals that are worth seeing.

"A GRAND DOUBLE CIRCUS of two exalted circus companies. Grandest of Hippodrome specialties."

There was no charge to see the street parade. It was: "A GRAND FREE STREET PARADE. A street pageant one mile long crimsoned with the radiant luster of the noon day sun reflecting scenes more grand than king or conqueror ever beheld."

A balloon ascension was promised for every show day but there are no reports along the route to indicate it ever occurred.

The performance was offered at the "USUAL PRICES OF ADMISSION."

Taylor used in every town a short squib stating that "Taylor's circus is the best ring show in America. Ask any newspaper man; ask any traveling man and they will tell you that F. J. Taylor has the best, neatest, cleanest circus on the road."

The show was endorsed by the mayor of Audubon, Iowa in a letter reprinted in the *Globe* and other Kansas papers.

"Audubon Iowa. September 2 1892.

"To whom it may concern:

"The F. J. Taylor circus gave a fine exhibition here today to a good crowd. The exhibition was a good one far above the average. The whole show is a credit to the enterprise of the manager Mr. Taylor. The performance was good and compares favorably with the great shows of Ringling

WAIT FOR THE BIG SHOWS.

An Entire City by Itself—Ten Times Larger than Ever.

F. J. TAYLOR'S AMERICAS GREATEST SHOWS. Circus, Museum and Menagerie.

Cut not arrived, will be in next week.

—WILL EXHIBIT AT—

Hanover, Monday, May 28, 1894.

[NOTE—Owing to arrangements made by the American Showmen's Pool League this will be the only big show to visit this county this year.]

\$10,000 That we give the best circus performance in America. **\$10,000**

40 Star Performers—5 Funny Famous Clowns.

A show to think and talk about. The greatest number of favorites ever assembled under canvas. A great holiday of rest and recreation for everyone. We guarantee to all a most enjoyable, moral, refined and artistic entertainment.

JIP AND SAMSON!

The mightiest and biggest brutes that breathe—the Goliaths of the giant tribe. The largest elephant and camel in the world. Jip, the grand old battle-scarred war elephant. Samson, the tallest sky-towering camel the world ever saw. Only fan-eared elephant in captivity. The only camel ever born in Iowa. A menagerie containing all the animals worth seeing.

A - GRAND - DOUBLE - CIRCUS!

Of two exalted circus companies. Grandest of Hippodrome specialties.

A Grand Free Street Parade.

Taylor's "cutless" advertisement in the May 18, 1894 Hanover *Democrat*. Kansas State Historical Society.

Bros., Barnum & Bailey or Forepaugh. There is one new feature with this circus that should entitle it to the respect of all good citizens and that is it is free from fakirs, Mr. Taylor not allowing such a class about him. Yours, H. W. Hanna Mayor."

Following show day the *Globe* reported that "F. J. Taylor's 'Greatest American Shows' which showed here yesterday was the best circus that has been in this section for a long time and well worth seeing."

No illustrations appeared in the White Cloud advertisement, but the *Troy Weekly Kansas Chief* reserved space in the advertisement for a cut and offered this explanation, "This space is reserved for AN ELEPHANT."

The following handout ran in the *Chief* on May 10: "TAYLOR'S CIRCUS AND MENAGERIE. The Only Big Show to Visit in This Vicinity This Year.

"Through an arrangement entered into between the proprietors of the leading shows of the country the great F. J. Taylor shows, which appear in Troy May 18th, will be the only tented exhibition of any importance that will visit this section of the country this year. Already the circus-loving portion of this community is on the tip-toe of expectancy over the coming of the old reliable F. J. Taylor aggregation; and it can be set down as a certainty that it will attract tremendous crowds. The proprietor of this well known establishment who is the acknowledged leader of the circus business of America is said to have outdone all previous efforts in this line both in the novelty of the entertainment and in the wonderful features exhibited. The securing of the umbrella-eared elephant, the only one in America, at an enormous outlay of cash is evidence that the manager of this great show is bound to exhibit to its patrons something new and worthy of the great reputation it already has. The street parade will be the grandest ever seen here. After the parade a grand free show will be given on the show grounds which is said to be best ever given. We confidently predict enormous crowds on the 18th."

The *Chief* reported on the exhibitions of May 18 at Troy. "Taylor's Circus showed last Friday to very fair crowds, considering the busy season and the hard times. We must say of this show what can be said of very few, that it was not accompanied by fakirs, gamblers or followers with games to rob the unwary. It brought no gangs of ruffians nor thieves to break into houses during the night. It was a pretty decent company."

The *Robinson Index*, commenting on the exhibitions of Saturday May 19, repeated a theme that frequently appeared in reports of circus days.

"The circus has come and gone with it many of the hard earned dollars of our citizens. It is strange that a circus will always be well patronized weather the patrons can afford it or not. There are people who will attend a circus or a show if they have to borrow to do it. We wouldn't be afraid to wager that of the people who attended the circus Saturday there were at least a dozen who borrowed the price of admission from some more fortunate brother. It is true that such enterprises spend a few dollars in a town but when you take into consideration the amount taken out it's but a mere pittance. The proprietors are not running such enterprises for their health and consequently cut expenses as much as possible."

In another column, "Taylor's circus is one of the cleanest shows on the road. There wasn't a game of chance of any description allowed on the grounds at all. The town was crowded with people Sat-

urday but there wasn't the slightest disturbance."

The advertisement in the *Nemaha County Spectator* for the exhibitions on May 22 at Wetmore was side-by-side with a Ringling handout touting performances at Holton on May 15.

On the 18th the *Spectator* reported that Ringling Brothers drew a crowd of 20,000 to Holton including 50 from Wetmore.

"Taylor's circus," according to the *Spectator*, "drew a large crowd to town Tuesday. The ring performance was very good for a wagon show."

At Frankfort on May 24 Taylor showed in the rain. The *Weekly Review* stated that "Taylor's Circus, which showed here yesterday, was liberally patronized. It was much better than when here two years ago—in fact it is a very good show."

Walt McCafferty's Great Golden Shows played Marysville on Tuesday, May 15, ahead of the Taylor aggregation which exhibited there on May 26. Coming on June 8 was Howe & Cushing.

Despite all the competition the Marysville *Marshall County Democrat* reported that "Taylor's Circus drew a fair sized audience who pronounced it a 'fair' show for the money."

The advertisement in the *Hanover Democrat* May 18 promoting the exhibitions of May 28 contained space for an absent illustration but explained that "Cut not arrive will be in next week."

The cut never arrived, but the ad was repeated on the 25th.

The *Democrat* ran several short announcements in the news columns on the 25th. "Taylor's show has billed Hanover in great shape. They have in advance three wagons and a troop of men to bill the towns." After the show had come and gone the *Democrat* disposed of it in one sentence "F. J. Taylor's circus drew quite a crowd to town Monday."

Summerfield saw the show on June 1 following McCafferty's exhibitions of May 11. The *Summerfield Sun* gave Taylor a good report.

Taylor disappeared from the Kansas press following the Summerfield date into the wilds of Nebraska.

F. J. Taylor's America's Greatest Shows Circus Museum and Menagerie in 1894 played these Kansas towns: May 17, White Cloud; May 18, Troy; May 19, Robinson; May 21, Horton; May 22, Wetmore; May 24, Frankfort; May 26, Marysville; May 28, Hanover; June 1, Summerfield.

An advertisement in the *Oketo Herald* announced the final appearance, evening only, on July 13 and 14, 1894 of Denver Dick's Wild West and Sioux Indian Medicine Company. The show arrived on Monday but the *Herald*, which published on Friday, ran only one ad in its columns.

DENVER DICK'S WILD WEST

—AND—

SIoux * INDIAN * MEDICINE * CO.

—PERFORMED BY THE CELEBRATED—

DENVER DICK
SCOUT, GUIDE AND INTERPRETER.

THE KING OF ALL MEDICINE MEN.

A WONDERFUL MAN WITH MARVELOUS INDIAN MEDICINE
THAT WORKS LIKE MAGIC. THE LAME WALK, THE
BLIND SEE, THE DEAF HEAR, THE DUMB TALK.

Denver Dick has spent years among the Indians of the Northwest, speaks their languages as freely as you speak English; knows all their secret remedies and how they are prepared for use. He can tell you of their mysterious medicine men, their strange beliefs, religious superstitions and their weird and wonderful dances. For Denver Dick's wonderful career in the wild west world, if truthfully narrated, make a large and most interesting book. Endorsed by every army officer and leading paper in America. If Denver Dick fails to tell you exactly what ails you without making a single question he will make you a present of \$100.00 in gold.

Consultation and examination free. Teeth extracted free of charge and free from pain, at his private office tent. Office hours from 10:30 a. m. until 4:00 p. m.

THE CAMPBELL BROTHERS,
Acrobats, Leapers and Tumblers.

THE HOWARDS,
Comedians, Vocalists, Dancers, Bone Soloists and
Lightning Change Artists.

FRED HATFIELD,
The Most Original Clown On Earth.

CHARLES CAMPBELL,
King Of Slack Wire Walkers,
Introducing his Wonderful Waltzing Wire.

LEO GREER,
Head Balancing Trapeze and Cannon Ball Juggler.

JIM---THE MCNERLS---GEO.
The Boneless Wonders.

MR. SAM DE VERNE,
BANJO SOLOIST.

Denver Dick Wild West ad in the July 13, 1894 *Oketo Herald*. Kansas State Historical Society.

Denver Dick was a "Scout Guide and Interpreter," and the self-appointed "King of All Medicine Men."

"He can tell you of their mysterious medicine men their strange beliefs religions superstitions and their wierd (sic) and wonderful dances."

The only reason for mentioning Denver Dick in this chronicle is to name his troupe of entertainers.

"The Campbell Brothers. Acrobats leapers and tumblers. The Howards. Comedians, Vocalists, Dancers, Bone Soloists and Lightening Change Artists. Fred Hatfield, The Most Original Clown on Earth. Charles Campbell, King of Slack Wire Walkers. Introducing his wonderful waltzing wire. Leo Greer, Head balancing Trapeze and Cannon Ball Juggler. Jim--The McNerls--Geo. The Boneless Wonders. Mr. Sam DeVerne, Banjo Soloist."

In conclusion the ad boasted that "If Denver Dick fails to tell you exactly what ails you without asking a single question he will make you a present of \$100.00 in gold.

"Consultation and examination free.

Teeth extracted free of charge and free from pain at his private office tent. Office hours from 10:30 a. m. until 4:00 p. m."

J. M. Barry's Great American Circus wintered in Carbondale, Kansas, 12 miles south of Topeka. News from quarters was nearly non-existent; the first word of the season of 1894 was a short note in the *Carbondalian* March 10 stating that: "Mr. J. M. Barry, owner of the Great Show, is making all preparations to go again upon the road this summer. He is going to make it larger and better than ever."

On April 7 the *Carbondalian* announced the opening date. "The Great American Show.

"Mr. J. M. Barry proprietor and ownel (sic) of the Great American Show and Menagerie has made large and extensive preparations to make this show larger and better than ever before.

"He will have this season, besides his inside show, a monster balloon which will ascend once or twice a day. This balloon is made of the best of silk and is 65 feet long and 45 feet in diameter and is owned and run by the celebrated air-balloonist T. F. Kincade who will make one ascension in the afternoon and from it will give his wonderful and dangerous parachute jump.

"His other actors such as bare back riders, tumblers etc. are of the best that has been seen under the white canvass.

"Mr. Barry intends to give his first exhibition this season in this city on April 21st."

After the opening the *Carbondalian* reported, "THE CIRCUS.

"On last Saturday the Great American Circus showed in this city as advertised. Directly after the parade the large show commenced and for two hours or more a tent full of our citizens and other people's time was taken up in watching one of the best ring performances ever shown before in Carbondale. After this followed the balloon ascension of Prof. T. E. Kinkade [sometimes it was Kinkade and other times Kincade] and his perilous descent to earth from an altitude of between 2,500 and 3,000 feet in a flimical (sic) looking umbrella shaped parachute. It was a grand sight and well worth coming many miles to look at. The tent was again full in the evening although the weather looked to be brewing upon the outside showing plainly that the afternoon performance was highly satisfactory.

"The actors are among the best. Mr. Wm. Dorr and his four little ponies are good, showing long and tedious work in their training. He also acts as the clown and makes lots of fun besides getting lots of fun out of it himself.

"The Eplanomdon Bros. [Topeka's Plamondon Brothers] in their trapeze acts

gave good satisfaction and in their ladder performance gave a specialty never seen before.

"Mrs. Josie Dorr and her trained dogs was well worth the price of admission, especially her riding dog Beauty.

"P. Rogan, the songster and clown, is all right in keeping the audience laughing as his songs are all the latest.

"Cora Adams, the juggler, and Gusie Keeting, the jig dancer, also Mlle. Frankie [Barry's daughter] in her Scottish Custom (sic) in her highland-fling, all are numbered among the best in all their specialties.

"We wish them success in their onward journey for if any show deserves it, it is the one that gives perfect satisfaction and J. M. Barry's Great American will always fill the bill."

The name of the aeronaut during the season was spelled many ways and his initials were just as consistent.

The first documented road date was April 24 at Overbrook. A handout appeared in the Overbrook *Herald*.

"Tuesday, April 24th, the Great American shows will be in our town. This show has been thoroughly reorganized and now have the credit of being the very best One Ring Circus traveling. More riders, leapers, tumblers, and trapeze artists than any other. We wish to call your special attention to the grand balloon ascension and parachute leap made by Prof. Kinkade. This positively occurs; free for everybody. See the great street parade. Do not forget the date April 24th. Price of admission only 25 cents."

Four days ahead of the exhibition the *Herald* reminded its readers that "Next Tuesday the Great American Circus will be in Overbrook and give two entertainments, afternoon and evening. One of the particular features of the day will be a balloon ascension and a parachute jump."

In another column the *Herald* announced that "The Great American Show that will appear here next Tuesday April 24th has eight cages of animals, trick ponies, educated dogs and some of the best ring performers now traveling. This will probably be the only CIRCUS that will visit Overbrook this season."

The *Herald* may have exaggerated the features of Barry's show, but it was correct when it predicted that it would be the only circus to visit Overbrook in 1894.

"Barry's circus has come and gone," according to the *Herald*. "He has more artists with him this year and the show was very creditable. The concert in the evening after the circus was a fraud.

"Prof. Kinkade received a very severe shaking up when he landed with his parachute Tuesday. One ankle was badly sprained."

Scranton saw the Great American on

April 25. The circus people, according to the *Scranton Gazette*, stayed at the Globe Hotel, which was "First-class in every respect" and only "\$1 per Day."

"Prof. T. E. Kinkade the aeronaut connected with the circus which exhibited here Wednesday had an accident at Overbrook Tuesday. He made the ascension all right but in coming down the air was very heavy and the parachute collapsed when near the ground and the professor fell to the ground and broke his ankle. He was consequently not able to make the ascension at this place. The balloon went up, however but the young man who went up with it did not make the parachute leap. It was his first trip and the managers advised him not to make the jump. The Circus itself was a surprise and the various acts with some exceptions were very creditable, particularly the slack wire performance of Mr. Plamondon and the trained dogs did well."

Barry met with competition at Scranton. The *Gazette* reported that "The man with the phonograph circus day did a land office business. He had some very good records."

The Westmoreland *Recorder*, following circus day May 3, reported that "The balloon ascension at the show Thursday was successful.

Barry's ad in the August 17, 1894 Moline *Republican*. Kansas State Historical Society.

"The show Thursday afternoon and evening was fairly well attended. It is about as good as the average little show that travels across the country."

The *Recorder* also mentioned that the show drew a good crowd when it played Louisville on May 2.

The Olsburg *News-Letter* ran a peculiarly worded account of circus day. "The circus last Friday [May 4] drew a large crowd to our burg but in spite of the severe hail storm the circus proved a failure, although had it been favorable weather this circus would have been a splendid one, and at places of exhibition is highly spoken of as worth attending."

"The Great American circus," according to the *Randolph Enterprise*, "gave an exhibition here Saturday [May 5] as they had advertised. Those who went to see the animals saw but a few monkeys and

dogs and an old lion. For a 25 cent show however it was fair. The balloon went up in the afternoon and the man who went up with it had a very nice trip, landing in a field near the northeast part of town. The tents were pitched on the vacant lots west of Heath's lumber yard. There was a good attendance and quite a crowd witnesses the balloon ascension."

During June and July the show played many dates in Nebraska. Some of the show personnel during the summer returned to Carbondale for brief visits and were recognized by the *Carbondalian*.

Ed Reddick was home June 9.

A. H. Green, treasurer, spent the Fourth of July with his family.

On the 8th of July Joe Catren returned home to recuperate from an illness.

The serious illness of one of his children caused George Watson to return to Carbondale.

The *Carbondalian* reported that "J. M. Berry (sic) proprietor of the Great American Shows came home last Wednesday [August 18] on a visit and attend to some business. The show is now or will be in a few days in the Indian Territory and doing a good business. Mr. Berry informed

us that he would make his last exhibition in this city before going into winter quarters which would be somewhere near the latter part of October."

The Grenola exhibitions of August 20 were reported by the *Grenola Chief*: "The Great American Show gave their performances here Monday. It was a small affair and didn't have half of what they advertised but came up to the expectations of most of our people and was conducted very orderly,

no gambling going on that we know of. They went from here to Moline."

The only advertisement for Barry's show found in the Kansas press was a simple two-column ad in the Moline *Republican* for the exhibitions of August 21, "The Great American Show At Moline Kans. August 21."

The advertisement quoted above in its entirety caused only a small ripple among the citizens of Moline. The only comment in the *Republican* was that "The Great American Show was with us Tuesday to the delight of the small boys and joy of other folks."

The Great American Show



At Moline, Kans.,
August 21.

The Elk City *Enterprise* carried no advertisement nor handouts but acknowledged the presence of the show with a brief paragraph.

"The 'Great American Circus' pulled in yesterday [Thursday, August 23] and pitched their tents on the vacant lots opposite the school house. They gave two performances which were very slimly patronized."

The Colony *Free Press* carried the handout quoted below: "HERE SHE COMES something that will scare the people of Colony to death: THE GREAT AMERICAN CIRCUS will be at COLONY on TUESDAY Oct. 2 '94. This is the only 25 cent show on the road today that is carrying a full line of wild animals. So you all want to be sure and come to Colony on October 2, '94."

The *Press* made no further mention of the Great American. Perhaps the date was cancelled for the *Carbondalian* on October 6 reported that "Berry's (sic) Great American Shows arrived home last Monday [October 1] and have gone into winter quarters. The boys who went out with the show last spring came back looking well and hearty and all claim that they like the show business and will be ready to go out again next spring with 'Dad.' The show has done fairly good business this season, notwithstanding the dry year and general depression all over the country. Our Citizens are glad to welcome the show back and we have no doubt that Mr. Berry will start out next spring with the largest wagon show on the road."

Carbondale was not honored with the last exhibitions of the year which occurred in some unknown village a short time previous to the return to winter quarters.

The last word on the season of 1894 appeared in the *Carbondalian* on November 24.

"Mr. J. M. Berry (sic) owner of the great American Shows which are in winter quarters in this city had the misfortune to loose (sic) his large lion on the 10th of this month. The animal was sick for several days before it died and refused to eat. After its death a post mortem was held to find out the cause of its death, when it was discovered that a lump or tumor had formed in its throat so large that it could not swallow and the animal virtually (sic) starved to death. The growth was caused it is said by a thrust from a pitchfork while the show was on the road several months ago. It is a heavy loss to Mr. Berry for there was very few larger or finer lions on exhibition than this one."

Tracing the route of the Great American in 1894 is unusually difficult for many of the cross-roads played by Barry had lost their newspapers because of the hard times suffered throughout Kansas.

The known Kansas dates of the Great American were: April 21, Carbondale Opener; April 24, Overbrook; April 25, Scranton; April 26, Burlingame; April 27, Harveyville; May 2, Louisville; May 3, Westmoreland; May 4, Olsburg; May 5, Randolph; May 7, Blue Rapids; May 8, Waterville; May 9, Greenleaf; May 10, Hanover; August 20, Grenola; August 21, Moline; August 23, Elk City; September 24, Weir City; October, 2 Colony (Cancelled?); October 1, Carbondale (No show) (Winter Quarters).

A delightful little show played a three-day stand in Topeka in 1894—Prof. Gentry's Great Dog and Pony Show. No newspaper ads were used but handouts appeared in all Topeka newspapers beginning May 25 in the *Daily Democrat*.

"Prof. Gentry's great pony and dog show appears under a tent on Quincy Street next Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday with a matinee Wednesday afternoon at 2:30. His knowledge of animals and his power over them is little short of marvelous and the interesting feature of it all is that he accomplishes everything by kindness alone."

On the first day of the stand, May 28, Gentry drew a large crowd to Kansas Avenue with a parade of his trained animals.

Following opening night the *Democrat* reported: "There was an immense concourse at the initial performance of Prof. Gentry's equine and canine paradox under his own tents near Sixth and Quincy last night. To say the crowd was pleased is not saying enough. The dogs and ponies delighted all. The manner in which the professor has trained the animals is wonderful."

"All manner of feats are performed and it is done with seeming intelligence of humanity. The dogs acting, the ponies waltzing, the leaping and jumping of the famous dogs, the merry-go-round act are all immense and the show should be well patronized. It is all that is claimed and the advertisements are carried out to the fullest extent. Everything is moral in every respect and will please the most fastidious."

Railroad car used by Prof. Gentry in 1894. Pfening Archives.



"At the show last night were ministers and their families, business and professional men, young ladies and young men. In fact it was a fine audience and a first class entertainment."

The Topeka *State Journal*, concerning opening night, remarked that, "The crowd outside the dog show listening to the band last evening was larger than the inside attendance."

"There are lots of people in Topeka," according to the *Journal*, May 29, "who enjoy seeing trained animals and from the number of persons at the dog and pony show last evening it would appear that Prof.

Gentry's aggregation is a drawing attraction. Nor were the people disappointed for the dogs and ponies seemed only too glad to show off their intelligence. The show is undoubtedly the best of its kind ever seen here."

"The tent is on Quincy Street between Sixth and Seventh. Prof. Gentry's animals show that their master possesses more than ordinary powers in training animals."

"The big monkey makes lots of fun for the youngsters by his antics. He is also an excellent rider and can stick on the back of either dog or pony in a way that would be hard to imitate by a human being."

"The ponies seemed to enjoy the music of the band and pranced around very prettily. One feature of the entertainment which was of special note was the high jumping of the big grey hounds. Prof. Gentry has some record breakers in these dogs. There was amusement for all from the youngest child present to the old gray haired man. The performance will be repeated tonight and tomorrow."

Those who attended the opening night exhibition must have been extremely pleased and passed the word to their friends for the second night drew "an immense crowd," the *Journal* reported. "The tent was full."

Admission children 10 cents adults 20.

Gentry's shows were always popular in Topeka and during the course of their existence played Topeka more times than any other show—16 appearances.

Lemen Brothers' New Colossal Shows opened the season of 1894 with two ex-

hibits on May 5 at Argentine, Kansas where the show had spent the winter. The Argentine *Republic* reported that "Lemen Bros.' Show drew a large crowd on last Saturday night and the performance was first class in every particular. THE REPUBLIC believes that the double-ring-four horse bare-back riding, swinging trapeze performance, pony riding, lofty tumbling, and boxing kangaroo will not be excelled this year by any circus on the road."

There was another story of opening night that ran in the Kansas City *Star* and was picked up by the Newton *Republican* which added a footnote.

"Eloped With a Contortionist.

"Edward Powers, a traveling salesman for the Hudson & Kimberly Publishing Company of Kansas City, Missouri, was in Argentine yesterday searching for his wife who it is supposed has eloped with Harry Nelson, a contortionist who travels with Lemen Bros. circus. The two, it is claimed, were seen together at the circus Saturday night and after the performance it is said they took a train for Olathe. Powers went to Olathe in hopes of locating the couple and will endeavor to bring them to justice.—Kansas City *Star*."

"It is supposed that the Harry Nelson referred to is the young man that was a resident of Newton some fifteen years ago and was known among the boys as a wonderful fellow on account of his limber body."

The first road date was Manhattan, May 7. The advance car arrived via the Santa Fe on April 21 and the town was properly papered. Newspaper advertising began April 25 in the Manhattan *Mercury*. The same ad was used over and over and was nearly identical to ads of the previous season.

"Will Exhibit in Manhattan MONDAY MAY 7 (Successors to W. W. Cole.) NEW LEMEN BROS. COLOSSAL SHOWS."

"The Big Features in a Big Show! Just Found! Just Added! Secured at a cost of over \$25,000. A Towering Giant among his fellows! The very Lord of Beasts! Taller! Longer! RAJAH! Weighs More! Costs more than any elephant ever captured alive or brought from his native jungle! RAJAH is on exhibition at all times in the big tent. No extra charge. One ticket admits to all the advertised show. 2 inches taller and 3,000 lbs. heavier than Jumbo."

"BOXING KANGAROO! The only Boxing Kangaroo in the world! As the world grows older and wiser science teaches man the true nature of beasts. The above cut shows the exact position of FIGHTING TOM (The Boxing Kangaroo) who was secured by Lemen Bros.' Foreign Agent at a cost of \$10,000.00. He will positively appear in the ring daily with his Trainer."

"The Only White Sea lions ever placed on exhibition in the world. They were captured by a Pirate Sealing Vessel up on the Kus-kik-vim River, Alaska and when found were being worshipped by the Natives who hold them as sacred as the Natives of India do the White Elephant. Humboldt or Darwin write nothing of



Illustration by E. Roe from an 1894 Lemen Bros. herald. Pfening Archives.

this specia (sic), still we hold the proof of their existence.

"SEATING CAPACITY FOR 10,000. 1,000 RESERVED RECLINING OPERA CHAIRS 1,000 ENCLOSED DECORATED BOX SEATS. 50 Experienced Ushers to attend to the wants of ladies and children. Experienced Detectives employed to protect the patrons of this moral exhibition. NOTHING LACKING! NOTHING MISSING! We have the Grandest Conglomeration of Moral Exhibits that Money Perseverance and Experience will permit us to Collect."

"See the Golden Gleaming Free STREET PARADE."

"Two Grand Exhibitions Daily! Cheap Round-Trip Excursions on All lines of Travel! Remember the day and date. We never change it."

"POSITIVELY NO GAMBLING ALLOWED."

A handout extolled the features of the season: "The features of the show this season will be Rajah, the big elephant, and Tom, the boxing kangaroo. Rajah has been in this country one year and is gradually becoming civilized and accustomed to the ways of the American circus. The circus posters this summer will say that Rajah is 'a veritable moving mountain

whose stately tread makes the earth tremble' and the writer of circus literature has not stretched his elastic imagination much in making this statement either. Rajah is without doubt the largest elephant in captivity anywhere. He is two inches taller than the late lamented Jumbo was in life and weighs 3,000 pounds more."

The reporter didn't take the agent's statement for this but measured the big brute himself and can therefore speak as one having authority. Rajah's keeper, Frank Fisher, stays by his side day and night and the two are as much in love with each other as a newly-married couple. Frank is an old-time elephant trainer and is loaded to the muzzle with interesting stories of the habits and intelligence of the 'biguns.' He has been with the Lemen show about a year and has been connected with all the big shows at different times.—Kansas City *Times* April 10.

"Will exhibit at Manhattan May 7th."

"Lemon (sic) Bros.' show failed to draw much of a crowd," according to the Manhattan *Industrialist*, "in fact there was hardly an average Saturday crowd in town when the afternoon performance opened. The parade was eagerly watched for and considering the size of the show was good. As for the show we can only say that it had but few new features though many good ones."

"The menagerie, while not extensive, is fairly good, most of the animals shown being in excellent condition. Rajah, the big elephant, is simply huge and if in good flesh would be monstrous, fully as large if not larger than Barnum's Jumbo."

"The people connected with the show commend themselves for their excellent behavior. One thing that can be said of this show, seldom if ever said of any other, is that the evening program was fully carried out, nothing being omitted or cut as is usually the case at night."

The *Mercury* reported that: "The menagerie was not extensive but contained fine specimens and Rajah the elephant towered above one of his fellows who appeared a mere pigmy in comparison. About the only features of the circus worth mentioning was the tumbling and trapeze performing and the boxing kangaroo which was even better than advertised."

Clay Center saw the show on May 8 and the village of Clyde on the 9th. Lemen Bros. did poorly on both dates.

"There were less people in Clay Center the day of the circus than ever before in the history of the town when a show was here. The impression got out that the show was rocky."—Clay Center *Times*.

"There are too many good Christian people in and around Clyde for the Le-

men Bros. to do well with their show." —Clyde Herald.

The *Farmers' Voice*, Clyde's other paper, ahead of show day ran the following handout: "The Boxing Kangaroo.

"The fact that human intelligence is not essential to success in pugilism is demonstrated by the performance of Tom, the trained kangaroo, which are diverting the patrons of the great Lemen Bros.' shows daily. Tom stands six feet high and planted solidly upon his two long hind legs with the adjunct of a powerful tail is able to stand up before human boxers and deal honest blows that would do severe damage to his antagonist but for the fact the fists of both are covered with padded gloves. Lemen Bros. exhibit here May 9."

The *Voice* had a few comments after show day: "Lemen Bros. circus was not accompanied by the usual number of gamblers and pick-pockets etc.

"There was not a great deal of liquor sold to the crowd yesterday. People are beginning to have a wholesome respect for the law.

"Lemen Bros. show here yesterday was slimly attended. They appeared to be very courteous affable gentlemen and did their best to make things pleasant for everybody. Their show was much better than it was last season."

The *Belleville Telescope*, after the performances of May 10, reported a new kind of fakir.

"Lemen Bros. circus which exhibited in this place Thursday of last week was not

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Friday,

(Successors to W. W. Cole.)

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NEW COLOSSAL SHOWS



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RAJAH THE BIGGEST BRUTE ON EARTH!
THE BIGGEST BORN OF BRUTES!
THE BIGGEST FEATURE YET!

Lemen Bros. ad with Rajah in the May 3, 1894 Mankato *Jewell County Review*.
Kansas State Historical Society.

so largely attended as such exhibitions usually are, yet the show was fully up to the average so far as the ring performances were concerned. The menagerie, though small, was fair. And one thing in their favor, be it said to their credit, it was without the customary gambling and fake institutions that usually follow a circus, the only thing in this direction being a couple of good looking ladies with what they called a blood-tester with a fortune telling attachment which caught the usual number of suckers that were more anxious to receive the smiles of the fair damsels than to know the condition of their blood or future or misfortune."

"The circus last Thursday," reported the *Belleville Democrat*, "was as thin as the crowd that attended it. The attendance was very small and those who had the misfortune to go in say it was very poor."

The *Mankato Western Advocate* claimed that Lemen Bros. shows brought the biggest crowd that we have had since Ringlings showed here one year ago.

The *Advocate* failed to relate how many of the throng attended the circus. Following Mankato the show disappeared into Nebraska.

In 1894 Lemen Brothers' New Colossal Shows performed in these Kansas towns: May 5, Argentine, Opener; May 7, Manhattan; May 8, Clay Center; May 9, Clyde; May 10, Belleville; May 11, Mankato.

Research funded in part by grants from Wolfe's Camera & Video, Inc. Topeka, Kansas.

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Inside Menagerie & Backyard 1940's, Madison Square Garden 1950's. Backyard scenes from the 20's to the 50's.

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CIRCUS LIFE AND ADVENTURE OF ADAM BARDY

A Connecticut magazine recently wrote this about Adam Bardy's book:

"If you're still a kid at heart when the circus comes to town, you'll love Adam Bardy's life story of his adventures of circus life. Adam Bardy was born in Webster on May 21, 1907. Back in 1907 thousands of immigrants from Europe kept coming to America.

"Bardy's life might be compared somewhat to Mark Twain's boyhood heroes Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, and back in 1907 in June, Mark Twain met George Bernard Shaw in London. It was a rainy Saturday when the Buffalo Bill Circus came to Webster. Adam Bardy was only 8 years old when he crawled into a circus wagon that night. However on Sunday morning when he crawled out of his hiding place, he wanted to get back home. Bardy had to have a guardian angel as he got back home before he was missed.

"In 1924 Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey Circus played in Worcester. Bardy's interest in the circus was renewed and he got a job with the side show. The circus liked getting young men to join them because it was out of young people that real circus troupers were made.

"Bardy found that circus life in the roaring twenties was rough and tough. On sunny days it was wonderful, but on rainy days you went to bed in the circus cars with wet clothes, and you would have to wait for a sunny day to dry out. If you could put in a full circus season under these conditions, you would be called a real trouser. In the twenties Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey was a railroad circus. It traveled in four sections. The first section was the cookhouse crew along with some circus wagons that carried the cookhouse. The second section carried most of the circus wagons and the stock cars full of work horses and nearly all the working crew. The third section carried the wild animal cages. There were 43 elephants with the circus.

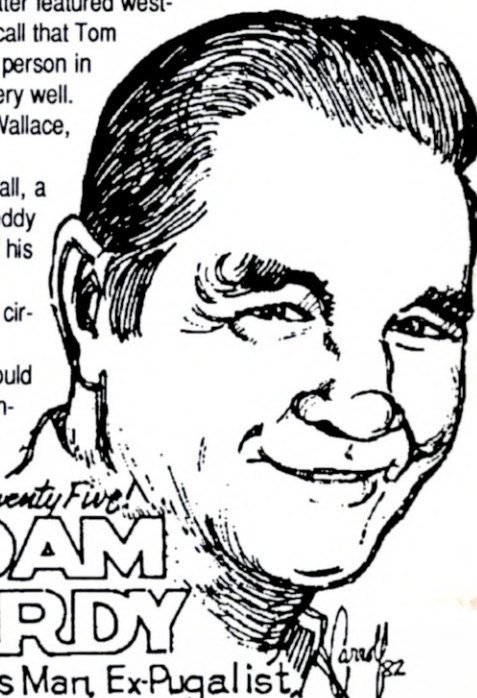
"One of our heroes was Tom Mix and on Saturday afternoon when the local movie theater featured westerns. Tom Mix and his wonder horse Tony was a favorite of young and old movie fans. We recall that Tom Mix was with the Sells Floto Circus and we were invited to attend the circus and see Mix in person in Willimantic. Adam Bardy was working with the Sells-Floto Circus at the time and knew Mix very well. There were more circuses in business in the twenties than there are now. Hagenback and Wallace, John Robinson, Al G. Barnes, Sparks and Walter L. Main were some of the big ones

"Few folks realized that Tom Mix was at one time a real sheriff, a Deputy U.S. Marshall, a Texas Ranger, a real cow puncher and ranch foreman. He was even Roughrider under Teddy Roosevelt. For Bardy to personally know and work with Mix was one of the truly great thrills of his wonderful life. Mix was one of the truly greats of the silent movies.

"Adam Bardy at the age of 86 can look back at his many adventurous experiences in the circus, life with Gypsies, fortune telling, bootlegging, marriages, and finding love and happiness.

"He has written a book *The Circus Life and Adventure of Adam Bardy*. This book would have made a wonderful movie with enough wholesome family desires of an eight year old "running away" for a day; joining the circus and becoming a boss canvasman and having his crew set up the big circus tent while still a teen-ager. Fortune telling, boxing, bootlegging, and after four score years becoming a successful author. With the right promotional agency, the life and adventures of Adam Bardy could be made into a television series that might parallel the Untouchables and Little House on the Prairie. Many men desire the anonymity of Mister X but Adam Bardy is a real Mr. X . . . Ex-Circus Man, Ex-Pugilist, Ex-Still Operator, Ex-Bootlegger, Ex-Fortune Teller, and an excellent author."

The book includes many pictures that tell the life story of Adam. For an autographed copy of *Circus Life and Adventure of Adam Bardy*, send check or money order for \$12.95 to:



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